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Special Anniversary Issue
December 1995–January 1996
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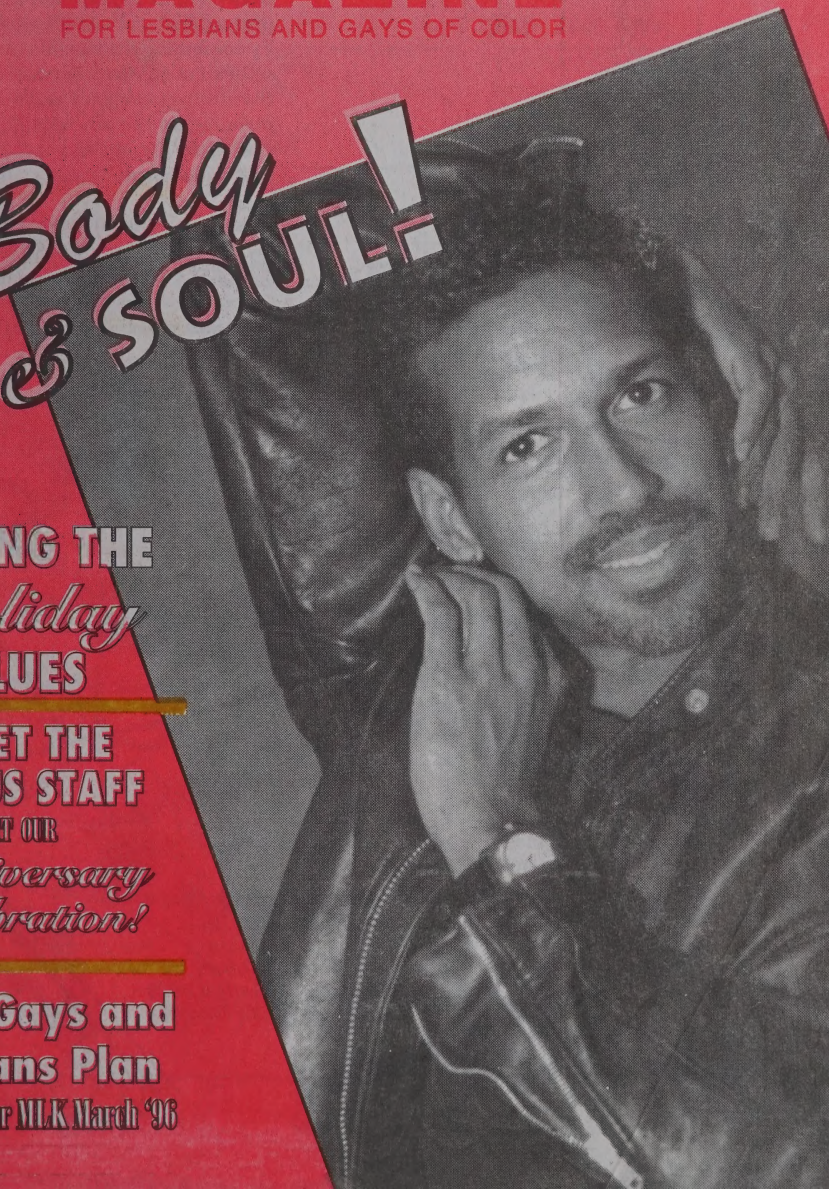
MAGAZINE

FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR



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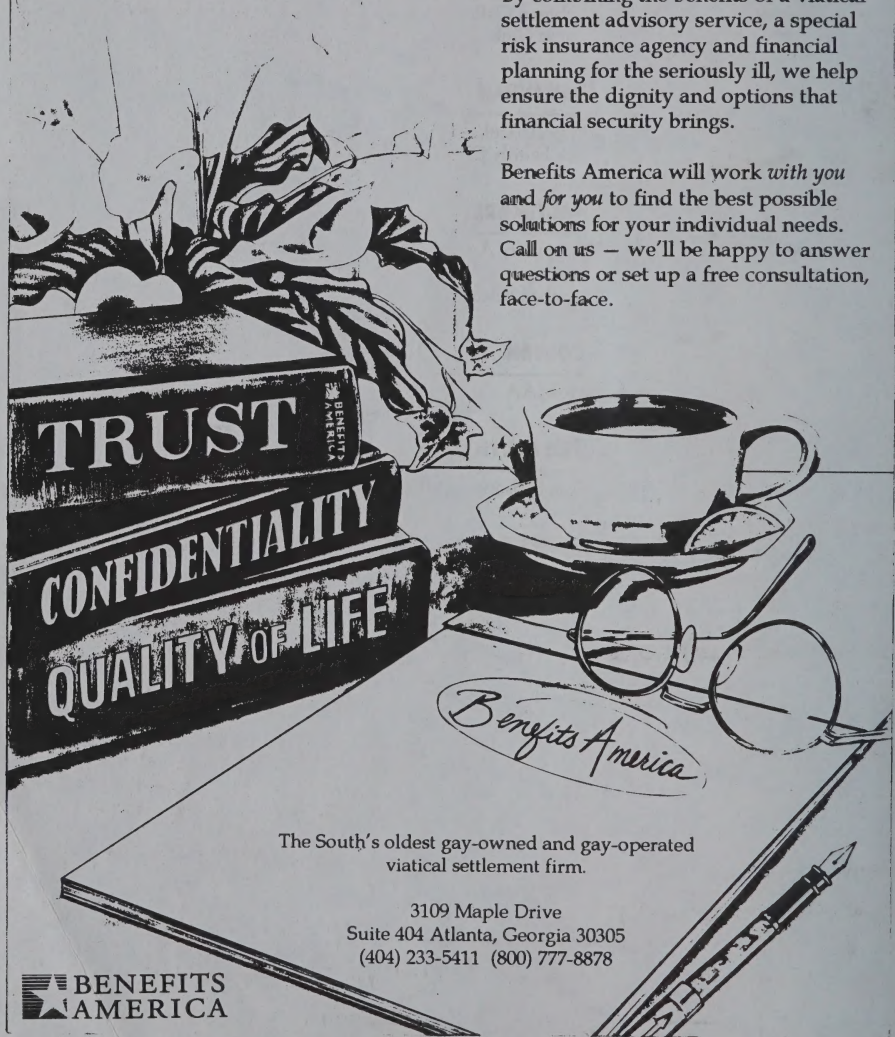

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October 27, 1995

Ms. Charlene Cothran, Publisher & Editor
Venus Magazine
Post Office Box 89238
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

Dear Ms. Cothran and the Readership of Venus Magazine:

Greetings and congratulation on the occasion of the "**First Anniversary**" of the publication of **Venus Magazine**! Originally, ***Venus Magazine*** was distributed throughout Atlanta's in-town communities . . . now, just one year later, you enjoy a distribution throughout the southeastern United States.

Venus Magazine, a magazine devoted to meeting the reading and informational needs of African American Gay and Lesbian people, fulfills a long overlooked void in the publishing world in Atlanta and the Southeast. Most notable though, ***Venus Magazine*** is the first magazine of its kind to practice the "politics of inclusion" by reaching out to the Puerto Rican, Cuban American, Asian American and other minority communities.

Congratulations to the owners, the staff and to the readership for making ***Venus Magazine*** such a smashing success in just one short year.

With best wishes for many more years of success, I remain

Sincerely,

Cynthia McKinney
Member of Congress

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MAYOR

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November 28, 1995

Greetings:

As Mayor of the City of Atlanta, I am pleased to congratulate you on this first anniversary of *"VENUS MAGAZINE."*

With Atlanta being the host of the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games, we applaud your efforts. The Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgendered Community is an integral part of our City, and the celebration of diversity only helps to establish and enhance our cultural relationships.

On behalf of the people of Atlanta, I extend best wishes for continued growth and success.

Sincerely,

Bill Campbell

Bill Campbell

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December 7, 1995

Ms. Charlene E. Cothran
Publisher
Venus Magazine
P.O. Box 89238
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

Dear Ms. Cothran and the Readers of Venus Magazine:

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on the successful first year of business in District One. **Venus Magazine** has broken through new territory by appealing to the South's people of color and to our vital gay and lesbian community.

A publication such as **Venus Magazine** deserves recognition and support from the community. With the effort of people striving for the cutting edge, the different facets of our society are represented. This is this service Ms. Cothran has provided for Atlanta and the Southeast for the past year. I for one am proud to say that I have known her for ten years, and have a deep respect for her endeavors.

Congratulations to Charlene Cothran and **Venus Magazine** on your deserved success, and good luck in the future years of business!

Sincerely,

Vern E. McCarty

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Come Out, Come Home

A letter from the editor

Come Out, Come Home is a theme that has lived in my heart and mind since the Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum met in Los Angeles in the early 90's. I remember trying to imagine how a spiritually connected, black, lesbian, businesswoman could live and work openly and freely yet remain connected to her Black People.

As Venus Magazine celebrates one year of proudly coming out, my personal focus now moves towards coming home; home to my people.

One year ago, I attempted to celebrate Dr. King's legacy by marching with the 'larger' or 'white' gay contingent. I must say that I have never felt more disconnected in my entire life. I had the overwhelming sense that I was part of a purely political act. I wanted to turn to some and say "Where were you before you needed the 'civil rights' movement?! You don't march like I march!"

I march with the spirit of Dr. King's dream on my mind. I march remembering the anguish of my ancestors not so many generations ago. I march staring into the eyes of a million black men, with no fear, understanding what American society has done to them. I march with tears streaming down because I can't save all the homeless black children lost to a generation of crack parents. This year, I'm not worried about what's politically correct. I'm focused on what spiritually connects!

This year, many Proud African-American Gay Men & Lesbians are planning to march with the African-American community as a symbol of unity and a step toward reclaiming our place at the Black Family Table. Join us for the First Annual Bayard Rustin Pre-Rally and Martin Luther King, Jr. March on Monday January 15, 1996.

This Year, Come Out, Come Home.

Venus™ MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

December 1995–January 1996
Vol. 2., No. 1

Editor in Chief	Charlene Cothran
News Editor	Doug Jones
Spirituality Editor	Kamau Ifoma
Health Editor	Leonard Jack, Jr., Ph.D.
Art Director	C.C.'s Attitude
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Photo by Jena P. Jones

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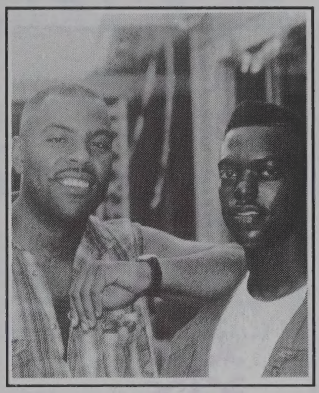
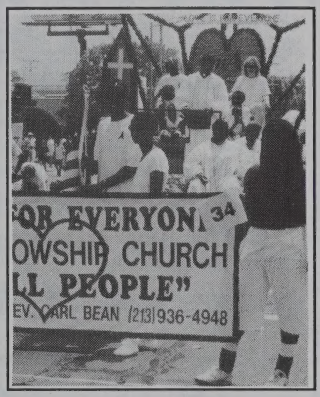


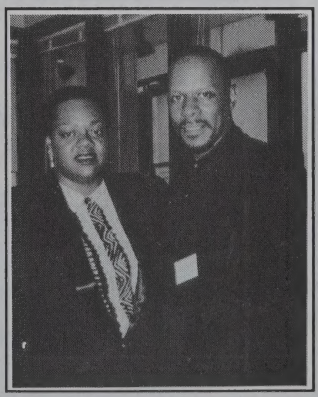
Kick The Blues!

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON



Rally for Rustin!

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON



Venus Celebrates First Year!

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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY Venus Magazine

Venus Landin
May 17, 1961–March 2, 1993

PHOTO BY POYO HINTON PHOTOGRAPHY

Venus Landin was born and raised in Saginaw, Michigan, where she spent most of her adult life before moving to Atlanta and getting actively involved in the gay and lesbian movement. Venus served as co-chair of AALGA (African-American Lesbian Gay Alliance), participated on the Atlanta Lesbian/Gay Pride Committee, Hospitality Atlanta, ZAMI, and the city council's Lesbian/Gay Public Safety Task Force. She was also the mother of a now 14-year-old son, Bobby Landin. To those who knew her and worked with her, Venus Landin's death is still tremendously felt.

"To the African-American community, we've lost someone who was a leader and also a worker," said Duncan Teague, in a Southern Voice article published at the time of her death. "That's how she led people—she got in there and did the grunt work. Nothing was ever too humble to her." "And to the larger lesbian/gay community, I don't know if they can ever fathom what they have lost," he continued. "Venus was willing to deal with the racism, and see the bigger picture."

"She was willing to take risks," said Teague, "but she would much rather be playing softball or having a beer and kicking back with friends." In between committee meetings, Landin did just that. Her bowling team came in first in Hospitality Atlanta bowling league, and she played softball and covered basketball for the organization. Venus connected with everyone.

In December of 1995, this publication, named in her honor, rolled off the press. Throughout the year the Venus staff members have contributed their time and expertise to bring our community a publication that we could be proud to share. Without these individuals, this work would not be possible! Stop by and greet them in person on Sunday, January 14 at 6:30 pm during the Venus 1st Anniversary salute by the National Black Arts Festival!

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atlanta ballet's

BODY AND SOUL

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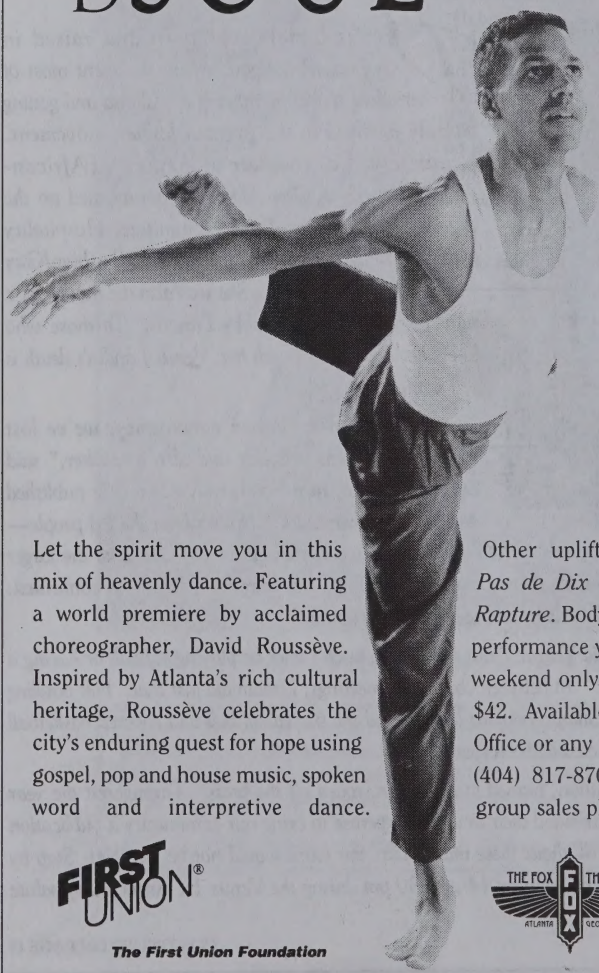
ATLANTA BALLET



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CHARLENE E. COTHRAN, publisher, editor in chief, is a graduate of Georgia Institute of Technology, School of Chemical Engineering. Cothran has spent the past 20 years in Atlanta. Born and raised in Trenton, New Jersey, she proudly recalls the development of her activism and leadership skills as a young member of the St. Phillips Baptist Church. Cothran has successfully sharpened her marketing skills during her 10 years as a residential real estate professional and plans to launch her own brokerage firm after the '96 games. Her motto for the 21st century... "We can have it all!"

ROSA BOWLES is distribution manager for Venus magazine. Currently enrolled at DeKalb College, Rosa works as a computer assistant for the USDA. She enjoys outdoor activities and helping the community.

ULESTER DOUGLAS, MSW, has written several articles on relationships including "Unraveling the Mystery of Attraction" and "Coming out of the Second Closet." Ulester is a therapist and consultant in private practice and an instructor with Men Stopping Violence in Atlanta.

DR. SHIRLENE HOLMES was bred and buttered in New York. She earned her B.A. in English from York College of the City University of New York. She went on to establish herself as an educator, playwright and solo performer. Dr. Holmes holds an M.F.A. in Theatre and a doctorate in Speech Communication from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Her most recent works, "Elle" and "A Lady and a Woman" have had successful productions both in Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, GA. Dr. Holmes is currently an assistant professor in the Communication Department at GSU.

REV. KAMAU IFOMA, founder of Home Free Ministry in Atlanta, he has published several writings on spirituality in the gay and lesbian community. His teachings have inspired many, and his articles continue to enhance our publication. A longtime resident of Atlanta, Kamau also heads the "singles" ministry at Home Free!

DR. LEONARD JACK, JR. has been a Behavioral Scientist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention since 1992. He is currently an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Morehouse School of Medicine. Dr. Jack has taught at Howard University and The Pennsylvania State University. He received his undergraduate training at Virginia State University and Master and Doctor of Philosophy in Health Education from Penn State University. Dr. Jack has published extensively in the disease prevention and health promotion literature regarding HIV/AIDS, cancer and substance abuse. Dr. Jack enjoys socializing with close friends, reading, volunteering at his local church and participating in an aggressive cardiovascular and strength training program.

DOUG JONES is a novelist from Brooklyn, New York, and has written numerous articles for Venus, including interviews with authors James Earl Hardy and E. Lynn Harris and activist Phill Wilson. Currently living in Atlanta, Doug enjoys stimulating conversation and traveling.

JENA P. JONES is a 35-year-old photographer who has lived in Atlanta for 29 years. She works in both traditional black and white color mediums, and has most recently begun to explore the digital process. She is using her documentary and technical skills to move her photography into the commercial arena. Jena has had her work published in many exhibits. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Arkansas at Pine

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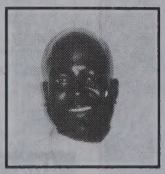
Bluff in 1983. Currently, Jena works with The Coca-Cola Company where part of her duties involve responding to in-house photographic requests from the Company's Legal Division.

JOJO This lipstick lesbian who hails from Philadelphia, believes in personal empowerment and its need among the black populace. JoJo is also kissing cousin (first cousin) to playwright and actor Blaine Teamer, who created an uproar with his award winning one man show, Black Coffee. Currently the dynamic duo are collaborating on their first novel, "The Life and Loves of LeeLee: A Drag Queen Trapped in a Lesbian's Body leading a Bisexual Lifestyle."

LEROY SCOTT, illustrator and long-time Atlanta resident, is no stranger to Atlanta's arts community. His work hangs in numerous restaurants and night clubs including Loretta's Dance Club. Talent comes in many forms and figures. This artist's extraordinary vision is electric. . . It plugs into your heart and soul.

RON SINGLETON, 37, born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, currently resides in Los Angeles. Ron believes that the Black Gay Movement needs to be documented and has dedicated himself to being one of its documentarians. Ron describes himself as a freelance photojournalist/imagemaker whose work has been featured in numerous Black Gay and other magazines including the LA Weekly and LA Watts Times, and in advertising. Ron was one of the artists featured in the first annual African-American Gay Art show in Los Angeles in 1995 and also had a one-man exhibit at the Cafe WoodFox also in LA. "I love to show who we are and that we are more than just sexual persons. I want the world to know we are friends, lovers, families and more." Ron is currently single and would like to find that perfect man who is strong, spiritually centered, supportive and secure in himself as a person and as a black Gay man.



CRAIG WASHINGTON was born and raised in New York City where he attended Columbia University and worked as a freelance writer. He has performed poetry with a choreopeom ensemble at Hunter College. In 1990, he started volunteering with the Brooklyn AIDS Task Force. In 1992, he and his partner, Leonardo Stroud, moved to Atlanta. He is currently employed at AID Atlanta as the African American Outreach Coordinator and is also a member of the Statewide HIV Planning Council. He enjoys reading, writing poetry, jazz and R&B concerts and dancing, of course.

EVE WERNICKY, 26, has been a featured writer in Venus whose contribution includes articles on playwright Dr. Shirlene Holmes, choreographer and dancer David Rousseve, and gay activist Urvashi Vaid, the first person of color to become executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Task Force. She is a former writer for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. She is currently working on a screenplay about her Cuban-Mexican and Jewish roots. She is single and at the risk of sounding like a cheesy desperate ad, is looking for a sincere woman she can dance with to Billie Holiday's "Our Love is Here to Stay."

Other contributors not pictured but whose work has greatly enhanced the quality of the publication are...

TONY DANIELS is a contributing editor and deacon in training at Faith Unity Fellowship Church.

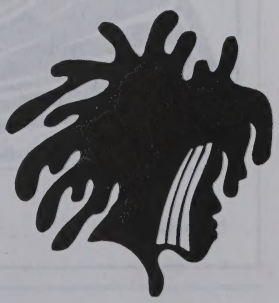
CHARLES EASLEY is a special events photographer and films editor.

TRE JOHNSON is our national liaison, writer, singer, poet, and performance artist.

DR. RODERICK K. LINZIE, Associate Professor of Sociology, Georgia State University

BESS KNOWINGS, Simplicity Attractions, New York.

BOBBIE MOORE, Founder of Simplicity Attractions Unlimited



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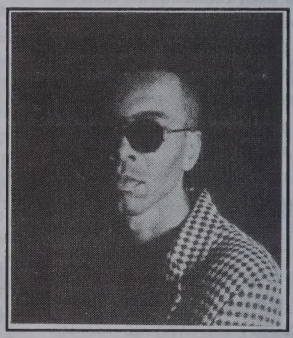

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PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name: . . . . . Chris Ruffin

Age: 32

Status: . . . . . Devoted

Career: . . . . . Property Manager/ Entertainment Promoter

Hometown: . . . Brooklyn, New York

Latest Book: . . "Lettin It All Hang Out" by RuPaul

Chris has successfully taken the lead of Hospitality Atlanta as Club Manager and Entertainment Coordinator. In addition, she is quickly emerging as one of Atlanta's top female D.J's. "My future plan is to take the entertainment of Atlanta's Lesbian and Gay community to an all-time high. Mom always said that with a positive mind, a true heart, and a strong faith in God—Success is Yours!"

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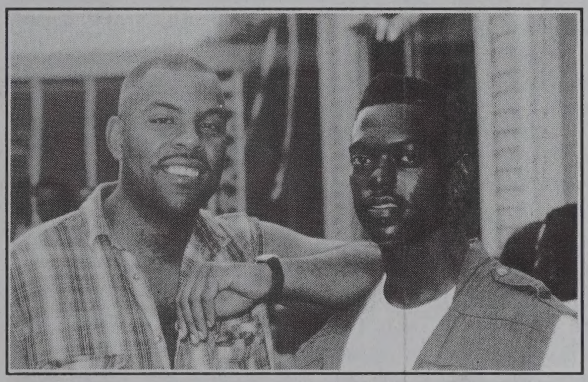
Kick the HOLIDAY Blues

Lesbian and Gay Couples: Coping with the Holiday Blues

Bonnie Harrison, MSHS, CSAC

The holiday season, particularly Christmas, Kwanzaa and New Year's are times when many of us reflect on the "good times" and all the fun we had over the past years. These are times we pull out the pictures, reminisce about who was with whom, who did what with whom, and other juicy tidbits. In other words, these are times when many lesbians and gays, as well as bi-sexuals, drag queens and transgenders get together to share, "pour the tea, and dish the dirt." For some others, however, reflection on the holidays can conjure deep sadness and much discomfort.

There are many justifiable reasons for people's sadness and discomfort. I have attempted to address some of those issues most frequently discussed by many of the black lesbian and gay individuals whom I counsel in my private practice. I chose to discuss black lesbian and gay couples in this article, however, because of the unique issues that surface for them during the holiday season, particularly Christmas.



PHOTOGRAPH BY RON SINGLETON

Additionally, many not-so-happy-and-gay emotions can arise during the holiday season as we attempt to satisfy cultural norms, familial expectations, socio-political commitments, religious and spiritual rituals, and the demands of love relationships, recovery and healing. There is also for many, that extra financial burden of trying to deal with the holidays unemployed, and with no available credit on your Visa, Discover, and MasterCard. Since you haven't lost your whole mind (or did you?), you know better than to even dream about charging anything else to American Express. Yet, you still want to buy or exchange gifts for certain special people.

Everyday issues confronting lesbian and gay couples very often stem not only from the attitudes of society and within our own cultures and religious groups. But rather, emanate from within the black family system where the values, beliefs and attitudes of the dominant culture about homosexuality have been psychologically, attitudinal, and behaviorally incorporated. This phenomenon exists even though

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

black culture reflects some of the most destructive aspects of the very same society that has oppressed our parents and ancestors for centuries. It should come as no surprise then, that many experience a myriad of emotions during the holiday season that do not necessarily culminate in individuals and couples feeling happy while being gay. There are many explanations I could give; however, I believe that the concept and reality of family is at the core of the holiday celebration and rituals. No matter who you are, or where you are, you would like to be able to spend quality time with family. However, unresolved issues that exist between parent and child or lovers will continue if you don't understand that the feelings of happiness you seek are generated from within yourself and won't result from someone or something else making you feel that way.

I truly believe that if you change your thinking you can change your life. This is a belief that I have tested, and I challenge you to do the same. Test it. One day, when you are feeling sad, angry, alone, afraid, or unhappy, take time to stop what you are doing, take three deep breaths, relax your eyes, jaws, shoulders, hands, torso, legs, and feet. Ask your Self to tell your mind what it is that you are thinking about that is causing you to feel this way. If you are feeling sad and demotivated, and can't identify any reason, ask your Self to help you think about something that you have a right to feel angry about—even if you are not conscious of feeling angry. More often than not, your spirit will tell your mind, and your mind will bring this truth into your awareness. You'll know that this is a truth because your feeling of sadness will lift, and you'll experience a spurt of energy.

Healing work or "cleaning exercises" are a gift we give ourselves when we come to believe that we are worth it. It's just that simple. In addition, changing the way we think and view the world and ourselves in relation to others in it, allows us to see each pain and disappointing as a new opportunity for us to create our own reality—to make our lives living examples of what we think we deserve and what type of commitment we are willing to make to ourselves in order for our dreams to happen. Life also offers through concrete, living examples, opportunities to reevaluate and redefine our own personal relationship with God, or Higher Power, the Orisha or our Ancestors. This will allow you to have a spiritual plan of action when all else fails.

Primary Relationships

A couple often mirrors the values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of their parents and caregivers. Predictably, adult lives and personalities will mirror the themes and expectations of their significant others. These factors become the variables that affect their relationships in both constructive and destructive ways. Individuals are so deeply affected by their primary relationships that many go through life with a seemingly uncontrollable urge to re-live the past and to re-create and re-experience old situations, even when they are not satisfying. What a shock it must be to recognize attitudes, behaviors, and values in our mate that remind you of that very same individual you still have unresolved issues with. Yet this is the person you chose for your mate. How many of us have conjured our mothers, fathers, grandmothers, aunts, uncles, sisters, and brothers into our bedrooms and kitchens, then expected our "marriages" with our soulmates to work? These choices are very often the basis for the "problems" that form like a heavy cloud to darken our spirits and create discomfort in our psyches and relationships during the holiday season.

This brings me to another important area of our lives that has dampened the spirits of black lesbian and gay couples in ways that are incomprehensible to so many of our straight friends and family members. "The Holidays" are extremely important in the black gay community. They allow us to come together as a community to create and re-create a personal sense of family. HIV, AIDS, chronic illness, marathon hospital visits, death, funerals, memorials and drug abuse have decimated the gay and lesbian family. No other group has ever faced the type of devastation and social stigmatization that those in the LIFE have had to endure. Never has a whole group of people been held responsible for a disease. Some critics believe AIDS became a disease that God created and heaped upon homosexuals because they dared life out this abomination, and because they succumbed to the most vile and sinful sexual acts. This does not mean that great strides haven't been made, however. What it does mean though is that gay and lesbian couples have more than a fair share of challenges to contend

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

with. Missing old friends, either because they have died, or because they are too sick to be with us during the holidays is saddening, and yes, even depressing. Seeing friends and family members who might be ill does raise the question: will they be here this time next year, or, will I?

This state of affairs can also be the source of much discord, particularly for those gays and lesbians who are in relationships with people who are in recovery and they are not; or those whose partner is HIV positive and they are not. If co-dependency is an issue for you, or for both you and your partner, getting through those times can be extremely difficult and emotionally draining. These are truly trying times—times when it would be wonderful to have mommy, daddy, sister, brother, grandma or anybody in the family's shoulder to cry on, but alas, like so many of us, you, too, come from a dysfunctional family system, and holding people hostage to unrealistic expectations serves no useful purpose.

Coping with the "holiday blues" begins when you decide to take back your power. Don't let the blues have it any longer. Decide to leave the blues at home this season. Besides, who would want to have such a disrespectful guest hanging around you for the holidays, anyway? It should be clear to you by now that the blues don't know how to act. They'll come visiting without being invited; and they'll show up and impose themselves anytime they feel like it. So get ready, a change is gonna come; on your mark, get set, wait for the slightest hint of an opportunity to leave the blues behind, get gorgeous, and GO TAKE THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!!!

What Color Are Your Holidays Red, Green or —Blue?

We are in the midst of the holidays once again: that special time of the year when people spend time with family and friends renewing old acquaintances and celebrating the new. It's supposed to be the happiest time of the year , but for many the holidays are dark. If you happen to be one of the millions of Americans who suffer from the holiday blues, here is a list of a few of the factors that might be contributing to them and a few things you can do to manage them.

CAUSE	REMEDY
1. Financial Strain	1. Realize that the holidays are a time for renewal and not necessarily for spending money.
2. Unfulfilled expectations	2. Instead of mopping around because you are not with that special someone, donate your time to feeding the hungry and visiting those in hospitals and nursing homes.
3. Changes in living and work habits	3. Keep your holiday schedule as normal as possible by getting up and going to bed at your regular times.
4. Dietary Concerns	4. Put only half of what you want on your plate. Try one fourth of the amount you really want for dessert.Try non-alcoholic beer, wine and mixes.
5. Unlimited time with relatives and friends	5. Set a start and finish time for family gatherings so people will know when to go home.
6. Noise pollution	6. Turn off the television, radio and record player when no one is listening. Limit children's time on video games. When everyone is talking turn off everything else.
7. Allergens	7. Limit your intake of eggs, milk, chocolate, red wine, spices and other edibles that may cause difficulty in breathing and nausea. Check for allergies to pine, snow flocking and angel hair.

The holidays may not be the perfect, magical time that we see on television, but they need not be the days that we spend in the abyss. Sit down and take a look at those things that may be causing you holiday stress and see how you can change them so that you not only survive, but thrive during this holiday season. Happy Holidays!

Marquita Byrd, Ph.D. is an associate Professor of Communication Studies at San Jose State University. She teaches courses in interpersonal and multicultural communication, interviewing and public address.

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The body and Soul of David Rousseve

by Eve Wernicky

It is an unusually glorious Saturday for fall and 35 year old David Rousseve is in town sizing up the metamorphic Atlanta Ballet which has enlisted the choreographer to help in its rejuvenation attempt. Artistic director of his own dance company, choreographer, writer, and director, Rousseve performed "Body and Soul," a collection of three works featuring a made-for-Atlanta world premiere, Feb. 1-4 at the Fox Theater.

"The (Ballet) is branching out in new directions," said Rousseve, "it's good that they are doing half classical, half modern but my work is much more experimental."

Experimental depicts almost every aspect of Rousseve's life.

Born and raised near the projects of Houston, he was exposed to the arts and humanities at a young age upon the insistence of his mother. Herself a product of the ghetto, she took theater classes and made it a point to share her discoveries with her children.

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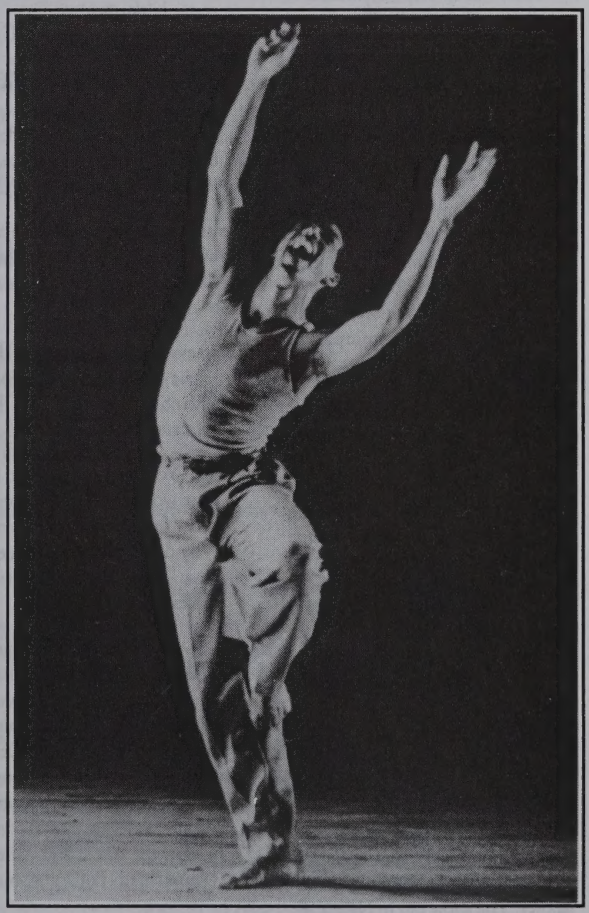


Rousseve began taking dancing classes at 14 to supplement his interest in acting.

Although his interest in dance grew, he also became curious about politics and law. In 1981, he graduated magna cum laude from Princeton University with a degree in political science and theater dance.

After graduation he danced in the companies of Jean Erdman, Senta Driver, Kathryn Posin, Stephanie Skura, Yoshiko Chuma and the Toronto Dance Theater. He also continued to dabble in acting with several television credits and stints off Broadway.

Then in 1988, he created his own dance company called REALITY.

" Part of my company's artistic agenda is to create a dialog with as many communities and audiences as possible, both on stage and off stage," Rousseve said, explaining the company's fruition.

The hands-on choreographer first received critical acclaim for "Pull Your Head to the Moon...Tales of Creole Women," a multimedia work retelling the story of his Creole grandparents and their cultural deracination.

PBS commissioned a film adaptation of the piece in 1992 and Rousseve later turned it into a full-length eight-part dance series called Urban Scenes/Creole Dreams.

His work, "Whispers of Angels," takes on the issue of death, AIDS, and father-son relationships. Funk diva Me'shell Ndege Ocello is the music composer. The show ran in New York from Nov. 27 through Dec. 3 at the Majestic Theater.

Venus: Does your interest in politics reflect your work?

Rousseve: My work used to be blatantly political. Now, a lot of my characters are third-world people. They are gay, lesbian black; the world is more about the have-nots, and putting them in a social contemporary setting that makes them very political."

Venus: Whispers of Angels purports the social notion surrounding death.

Rousseve: "It is a statement of death and dying. Death is imminent and a man who is dying, is having his life flash before his eyes. It is a piece of joy and a lot of melancholy."

Venus: In the new piece you are working with Me'shell Ndege Ocello. What does she bring to the work?

Rousseve: "She is writing the music and is great to work with. She contributes to the perspective of the piece."

Venus: You are very involved in your work. You direct, produce, write, choreograph and even dance in many pieces. How does the creative process flow?

Rousseve: "One of the advantages of the process is that you turn to your own personal issues—which is probably also the hardest part of the process when you have to face things that are difficult to face. Usually, I develop characters in text, the music and dance is formulated. But sometimes

PHOTOGRAPH BY JENA JONES

that does change for every piece."

Venus: Artistically, who has inspired you the most?

Rousseve: "Probably, Toni Morrison"

Venus: A writer?

Rousseve: "Yeah, I know but I have a lot of text in my pieces. I think she shows what a lot of artists of color can do. I think she has great technical skills in conveying our culture with warmth and depth."

Venus: Who has inspired you most in your everyday life?

Rousseve: "My grandmother has been my greatest influence."

Venus: "Pull Your Head to the Moon...Tales of a Creole Woman" is based on her life experiences. You later very interestingly expand that piece to "Urban Scenes/ Creole Dreams."

Rousseve: "The intent was to juxtapose her early life with urban life; her world and our world. It looks a her loss and our loss. She grew up in the

heart of Louisiana swamp land and was part African, part French, part (Native American) Indian."

Venus: What is it that you want the audience to walk away with?

Rousseve: "It's all about communicating. I have been privileged that being black I have been able to speak to different people... non-black, gay, non-gay. I have the opportunity to preach to the non-converted. There aren't a lot of people who have the opportunity to play to a wide range of audiences. If you look at something like ballet or dance, most of the audiences are older white straight crowds. what I want more than anything is for them to see the characters as human beings."

Venus: What, so far, has been the pinnacle of your career?

Rousseve: "The opportunity to travel to Europe and have the company play in places such as France and Brazil. But to me, the press and the accolades are not what's important. What totally overshadows that is when you touch people."

Venus: Do you find that culling from your own personal experience makes the work cathartic for you?

Rousseve: "Certainly, and I hope it's that way for the audience too. My grandmother's best friend was raped and I try to deal with the issue. Also, I've included the issue of abuse as a child and my own child abuse as a reference point. It is therapeutic because you go through a real journey into the psyche—for better or for worse."

Venus: Why the company name REALITY?

Rousseve: "I think that some ballet has nothing to do with contemporary reality. I hope that in 10 years I'll still be working with the company because there are a lot of good younger companies doing work in touch with today's society."

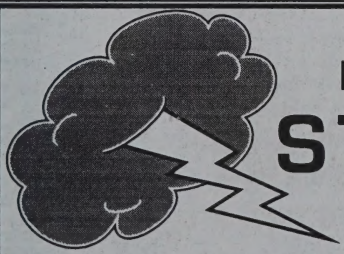
Venus: Among your accolades is a fellowship from the National Endowment of the Arts, I'd be remiss not to ask your take on the flap over that issue?

Rousseve: "It's horrifying on a cultural level. I originally had a two-year fellowship, but the (NEA) has just told me that they are going to award the fellowship on a year-to-year basis because they don't think they will be around in two years. The bottom line is that in the PC society that we live in, whatever is minority or controversial, whatever is black or gay is going to get cut out first."

Venus: How is that?

Rousseve: "It's the world we live in."

Eve Wernicky is a freelance writer and former journalist of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.



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PROFILE OF A MAN

Name: . . . . . Rich Williams

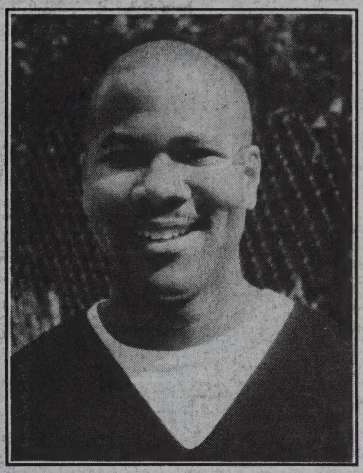
Age:. 25

Status:. . . . . Dating

Career: . . . . . Development Assistant for Harvard AIDS Institute

Hometown:. . Boston

Latest Book:. "Prophetic Reflections" by Cornel West



In his spare time, Rich loves to "surf the net," get involved in AIDS/BGM related events and listen to his ever-growing CD collection of over 600+ titles.

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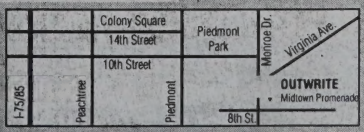

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Glenda the Good Witch in The Wiz

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!...
When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream of glass;
When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals—
I know what the caged bird feels!

Paul Laurence Dunbar

Have you ever had a dream? A dream that you knew no one else could fulfill because this dream was just for you. Maybe you have dreamed of being CEO of your own corporation. Or you have dreamed of traveling the world over. Maybe your dream has been to perform on the stages of Broadway or the movie sets of Hollywood. This dream has become so real for you that you can see, touch, taste, smell and hear every aspect of this dream.

And yet, even with all the good feelings about the dream, there always seems to be that doubt or fear that holds you back. You think of all the statistics which show how a large percentage of upstart businesses fail in their first year. Your family's constant disagreement of your choices in life ring in the back of your head. You've never gone to school to prepare for this. And of course you know that only 1 in a million make it successfully.

Have you ever had a dream, caged in the doubts and fears of your beliefs?

The basis for what we call failure is simply a belief system in one's inability to succeed. It has been so ingrained and conditioned into the depth's of our souls that we don't believe that we have

what it takes to make it in this world. Hundreds of years in slavery and after slavery stripped the African people, worldwide, of its basic belief in self. We have been taught, purposefully and systematically, that someone outside of ourselves always knew what was best for us. And being the good students that we are we learned to follow these instructions very well.

Your failures in life come from not realizing your nearness to success when you give up.

Yoruba Proverb

Take a moment to think about the good feelings that you get when you are unconsciously dreaming your dream. Then think of the mental tapes that play as you "regain" consciousness. If you are one who has not pursued or realized your dream then the tapes probably have the message of "I can't do this... who do I think I am... how will I pay my bills... do I have what it takes?" Now think for a moment again. Which of these appear to have the most energy within it? Which of these messages tend to get you most excited? Once again, if you are one who has not followed your dream the message of "I can't" shouts much louder to you than the message of "I can".

Those tapes that you hear are firmly logged into your subconscious mind. The part of the mind that acts out, if you know what I mean. Because the subconscious holds our memory and it never forgets, it is where we generally find our level of intention. Intention is the energy that drives what we truly believe into being. For example, if you are in a relationship that seems to be going nowhere, both of you are constantly thinking of your disappointment and utter disgust with the way the relationship is unfolding, and yet you keep trying to make it work. Regardless of how much effort you put into making the relationship work, disappointment has probably become the dominant force in your thoughts. Therefore you subconsciously begin to work harder to sabotage the relationship than you do to save it. Your intention has become to release rather than to save and this message is now holding a majority of stock in your energy system.

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he

Proverbs 23:7

Don't give up 5 minutes before the miracle.

Iyanla Vanzant

It matters not how straight the gate
How charged with punishment the scroll
I AM the master of my fate
I AM the captain of my soul

Invictus

So how does this work with your dreams? When your thoughts have more energy riding in the thought of "I can't fulfill this dream", then you're right, you can't. But don't give up! There is more than just hope. Remember, there has been a process that conditioned you to have the belief that you do. That same process can be used to move you to rethink your position. The difference this time is that you are in control of the conditioning process. YOU have the power to control what goes in to your beliefs and what comes out. And oh yes! It is very important that you force out those beliefs that are no longer beneficial to you. And I mean THROW THEM OUT! Begin to deny their power in and over you.

Replace them with affirmations that represent who you truly are. You truly are a SUCCESSFUL EXPRESSION OF THE CREATOR. You are DIVINE. You are OMNIPOTENCE, OMNISCIENCE, OMNIPRESENCE and OMNIACTIVITY. You are PROSPEROUS to the point of OVERFLOW. There is nothing that can be denied you when you know the truth about your beingness. You are the IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF SPIRIT. That means when you look in the mirror what you see is SPIRIT looking back at you.

A caged dream is like an enslaved man. It cannot fulfill itself without being freed first. And remember, it took more than a day for you to think the way that you do. So don't get disappointed if nothing changes today or tomorrow. Be persistent. You deserve it. You are worth it. You are the BEST! You ARE 1 in a million.

Just BELIEVE! And all your dreams shall be added unto you.

Reverend Kamau Ifoma is founder of HomeFree Ministries

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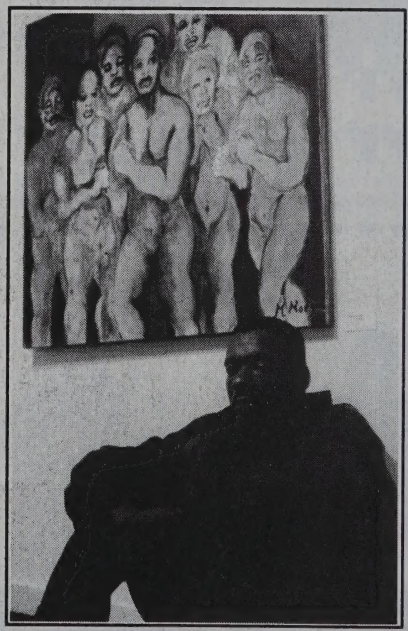
Michael C. Morgan

Visual artist Michael C. Morgan has been commissioned to produce an original work commemorating the 1st anniversary of Venus Magazine. The unveiling will take place on Sunday, January 14 at Karats, 511 Peachtree St. at 6:30 PM during a ceremonial salute by the N.B.A.F.

Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, Michael displayed a talent for the visual artist an early age. This natural talent was reinforced during his high school years while attending North Carolina School of Performing Arts, Winston-Salem, NC. During Michael's last year of high school, he was awarded a scholarship to study Drawing and Art History in Europe.

Michael then attended Atlanta College of Art in Atlanta. His concentration was in painting. While attending Atlanta College of Art, Michael entered the Collections of Life and Heritage, Inc., 1st Invitational Art Show, winning first place for his painting "Sunday Morning." In 1987 Michael was awarded a Bachelor of Fine Arts.



Artist Michael C. Morgan will unveil a commissioned work entitled "Venus" during an anniversary reception at Karats Rhythm and Blues.

Since graduation, Michael has been with the Department of Adult Education at the High Museum of Art and with Art Installation Services. He has also taught art classes to inter-city youths and lectured at Livingstone College. Michael has exhibited his work in many shows and exhibitions and has also received a grant from the Bureau of Cultural Affairs to produce works.

Michael has only started to climb towards a successful career and he will continue to work toward becoming one of the greats.

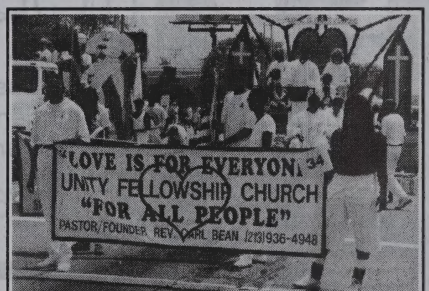
Black Gay Activist Honored!

This year Atlanta's African-American Gay & Lesbian Community will honor the memory of Bayard Rustin during a rally just prior to the annual King Day March. The rally will begin at 12 noon on Monday, January 15, 1996 in the parking lot next to Velvet's (John Wesley Dobbs Ave.). Take MARTA to the Peachtree Center Station, exit at the Georgia Pacific Building. Please join us immediately after the rally as we march as a Black Gay contingent with the African-American Community.

We feel that it is extremely important to begin to build bridges within the African-American community. Let's show our community that we are not afraid to be visible and that we love being Black! Let's join hands and march with our elders, our children, our leaders and humanitarians. Let us reclaim our seat at the Black Family Table.

At one time Bayard Rustin was one of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s top advisors. He is credited as the organizer of the 1963 March on Washington. Rustin was black and gay.

"My being Gay was not a problem for Dr. King but a problem for the movement.... The committee finally came to the decision that my sex life was a burden to Dr. King. I think it was around July when they advised him that he should ask me to leave. ..."



PHOTOGRAPH BY RON SINGLETON

Join Unity Fellowship Atlanta, Venus Magazine and the Men of Second Sunday Discussion Group for the Bayard Rustin Pre-March Rally and King March '96.

This was about 1960, however King continued to consult Rustin although he was not publicly a part of the inner circle. In 1963 it appeared that Rustin would be named director of the March on Washington. It was the strong objections from Roy Wilkins, then heading the NAACP, who maintained that it was not Rustin's homosexuality that was in question but despite Rustin's "talents, I don't think you should lead this important march." Rustin quoted Wilkins in a 1985 interview.

A. Philip Randolph became the director saying he would only accept if he could appoint Rustin as the deputy director. Rustin read the closing list of demands after King's "I Had A Dream." Rustin and Randolph founded A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI), to improve the lives of Negroes in the trade unions and for racial equality and economic justice for all Negroes. Today African American unionists who benefited from APRI total over three million.

Rustin died in 1987, the same year as author James Baldwin and Harlem Renaissance writer Richard Bruce Nugent. Surprisingly, a CD of Rustin as a singer was released in '94 by the Bayard Rustin Fund in New York.

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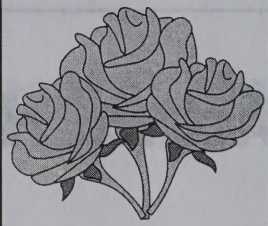

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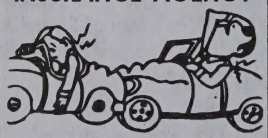

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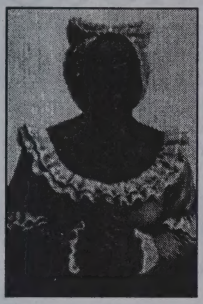

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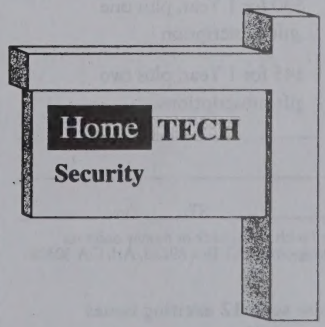

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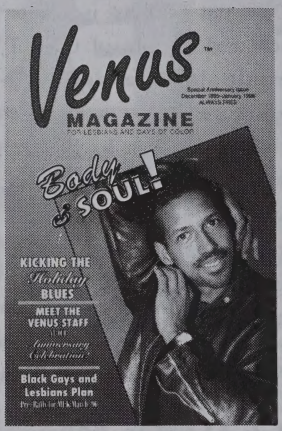

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News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell and Dr. Helene D. Gayle, Director of National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention for the CDC, both participated in the opening plenary session of President Clinton's Conference on HIV/AIDS on December 6, 1995.

The family of poet/author/performer **Essex Charles Hemphill** have established a fund in his memory.

The purpose of the fund is to finance the completion of projects of Essex was working on at the time of his death. Contributions can be sent to The Essex Charles Hemphill Memorial Fund, c/o The National Capitol Bank of Washington, 316 Pennsylvania Ave., SE, Washington, DC. 20003. All contributions are tax deductible.

Portsbridge Hospice, Inc., a licensed hospice facility in northeast Atlanta, opened its doors in April of this year to provide impatient care for persons with AIDS. Since opening, Portsbridge has served as a home to some fifty residents. Although a large number of patients are living with AIDS, care at the facility is available to anyone diagnosed with a terminal illness. Their mission is to provide personal support and care in a loving environment to those whose life expectancy is limited. All services are designed to preserve human dignity, enhance quality of life and provide compassionate care for the resident, their family, and friends. Located in the residential neighborhood of Dunwoody, services at Portsbridge Hospice are not based on ability to pay. For additional information call (404) 936-9546.

A special early release of **And This Too Will Pass**, the latest literary work of Atlanta author **E. Lynn Harris**, has been approved by Doubleday Book Publishers for sale in Dallas at the ninth annual Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum to be held February 13-19, 1996.

Urvashi Vaid returns to Atlanta as co-grand marshall of this year's 1996 Martin Luther King, Jr. March on January 15. Vaid will march as a representative of the National gay community and will speak at a rally at the Martin Luther King Center for Non-violent Social Change on Auburn Avenue after the march.

The next general meeting of **GLAAD/Atlanta** is scheduled for Sunday, January 7, 1996 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM at the GLAAD office located at 828 West Peachtree Street, 2nd floor (at Fifth and West Peachtree Streets). For additional information, please call 404-876-1398.

Treatment newsletter focuses on some of the common annoyances of HIV infection. New York City—Community Prescription Service (CPS), the nation's only HIV+ owned and operated mail order prescription service, announces the publication of its most recent issue of InfoPack, a resource-filled AIDS treatment newsletter that is distributed free of charge to AIDS service organizations, health care professionals, clinics and individuals nationwide. Free copies of the InfoPack are available by calling Community Prescription Service at (800) 842-0502.

Research Study of Combination AIDS Therapies Underway. Whitehouse Station, NJ, Oct. 31, 1995—The inter-Company Collaboration for AIDS Drug Development with PAREXEL International Corporation announced today that the second research study for the Collaboration has begun to enroll patients at sev-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 49

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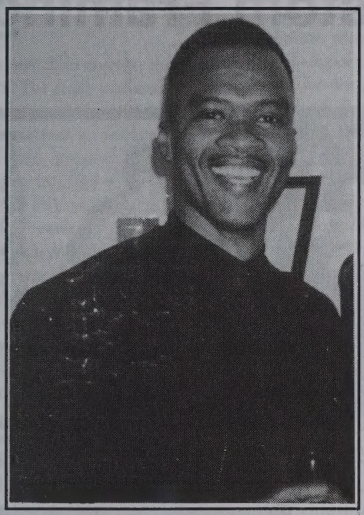

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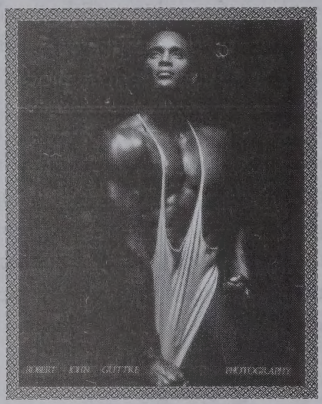

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The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45

eral research centers in the United States. The study evaluates the ability of two different three-drug combinations to reduce the viral load and produce a sustained increase in CD4 cells in patients who are HIV positive, have a CD4 count between 200 and 500 cells/mm3, and who have not previously received antiretroviral therapy. Patients and physicians who are interested in enrollment information about this triple combination study can call the Inter-Company Collaboration's Clinical Coordinating Center located at PAREXEL at 1-800-925-AIDS from 9 am to 5 PM E.S.T., or call local Atlanta Doctor Steven Marlowe at (404) 350-5714.

The Atlanta Lambda Center's first in a series of Community Forums featured as special guest **Mandy Carter**, coordinator of North Carolina Mobilization '96: Mobilizing the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Vote to Defeat Jesse Helms. The forum focused on "the state of the movement" on the national level. Carter discussed North Carolina Mobilization '96 and told those present how they can get involved in this effort. The second Community Forum has been scheduled for Sunday, January 14th, in the same location. The focus of this forum will be our local l/g/b/t community and movement. In addition to the Lambda Center, this second forum will be sponsored by the Georgia Equality Project and the Atlanta Pride Committee, and will feature as a special guest Urvashi Vaid. For more information, call Saralyn Chesnut at (404) 727-2136.

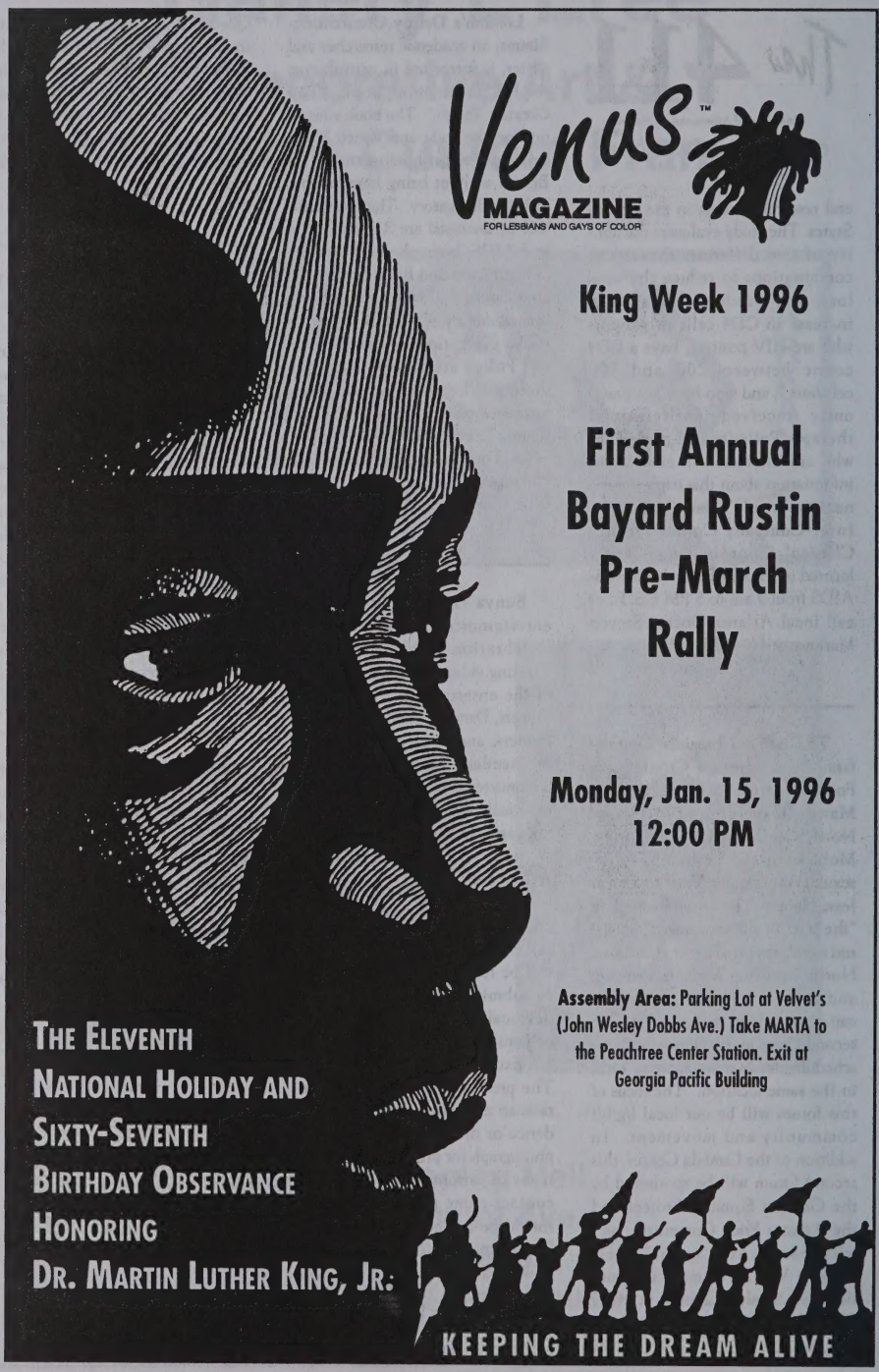
London's Delroy Constantine-Simms, an academic researcher and writer, is interested in contributors for his forthcoming book, "The Greatest Taboo." The book aims to outline the wide and varied Black perspectives on homosexuality in Britain without being homophobic or being derogatory. The issues that will be discussed are Religion; HIV and AIDS; homophobia in music; White racism and Black homosexuals; Coming out; myths surrounding homosexuality; The Black & White media perceptions of homosexuality; Police attitudes to anti gay violence; Legislation, etc. Any interested parties may contact Pablo Imani, Think Doctor Publications, 420A The High Road, Tottenham Haringey, London N174HJ, Tel: 0181 808 4513 or 0181 885 4372.

Sonya Hemphill, co-chair of entertainment for Atlanta Pride Celebration 1996, is currently enlisting volunteers for every aspect of the entertainment committee. Singers, Dancers, bands, ethnic performers, and children's performers are needed. The Atlanta Pride Committee will be accepting promotional kits until January 25, 1996 from artists interested in performing at the 1996 Atlanta Pride festival, June 28, 29, and 30. All performers will be required to submit promotional kits to be considered—No Exceptions.

The promotional kit should contain: an audio tape or CD, video for dance or other type performance, photograph for print purposes, biography of performer or group, and a contact name and number. Kits should be mailed to Atlanta Pride Entertainment Committee, 4880 Lower Roswell Road, Suite 630-117, Marietta, GA 30068. All inquiries should be done by mail. Questions by phone should placed to Sonya at (770) 263-0554. The Entertainment Committee is also accepting resumes from individuals who are interested in working as stage crew or stage managers. Resumes can be submitted to the address noted above.

On January, 26, 1995 from 8:30 am – 12 Noon at the Holiday Inn (130 Clairmont Ave., Decatur) there will be a **Community Housing Forum** for **social workers, case managers, discharge planners and insurance specialists** focusing on housing options for people living with HIV. Facilitating the workshops are Jim Sacco, MSW, LCSW and Mary Lubinsky, Director of the Living Room. After the day's conclusion, a Housing Fair and Slide Show presentation will take place. The Community Housing Forum is free of charge. Complimentary Continental Breakfast provided. For further details, contact Home But Not Alone at (404) 875-7881, ext. 27.

Black Gay Pride Atlanta '96 will hold its next general meeting on Sunday, January 7, 1996 at Karats Rhythm and Blues at 6 PM. Nominations are still being taken for board members. Any interested parties should contact the search committee (404) 622-8069 ASAP. The chosen board of directors will be announced on Monday, January 15,1996.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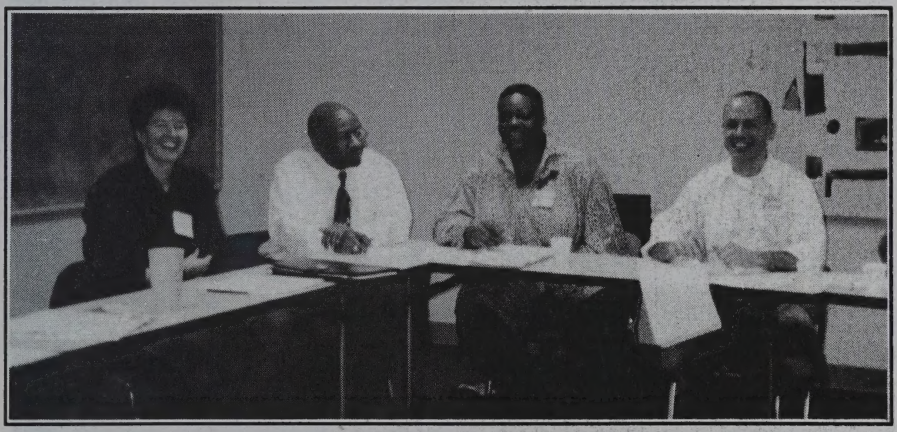

Participants at GLAAD reorganizing meeting include (l-r): Lawrie Demorest, co-chair HRC Annual Dinner; Dr. Roderick Linzie, Department of Sociology, Georgia State University; Charlene Cothran, Publisher of Venus Magazine; Jason Hefner, of G.L.A.A.D. National.

Over two dozen members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered community and allies gathered to plan the rebirth of the Atlanta chapter of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (G.L.A.A.D.). "I am excited by the number of people who attended, their commitment to making G.L.A.A.D./Atlanta a truly inclusive chapter and the level of enthusiasm" stated Floyd Taylor, one of the organizers of the meeting.

Discussion focused on ensuring that GLAAD provides services to both the greater Atlanta and the southeastern regional media outlets. Emphasis was placed on reading and working with African-American media and the media serving other people of color communities. As a result of these discussions, several committees were formed.

The next general meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 7 at 7:00 PM at the G.L.A.A.D. office located at 828 West Peachtree Street, Second Floor. For additional information, please call 404/876-1398.

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Proposed Plenary
Community Relationship ▼ Political vs. Nonpolitical vs. Apolitical
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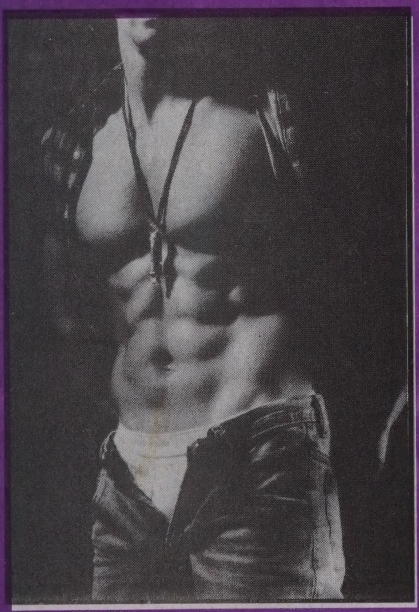

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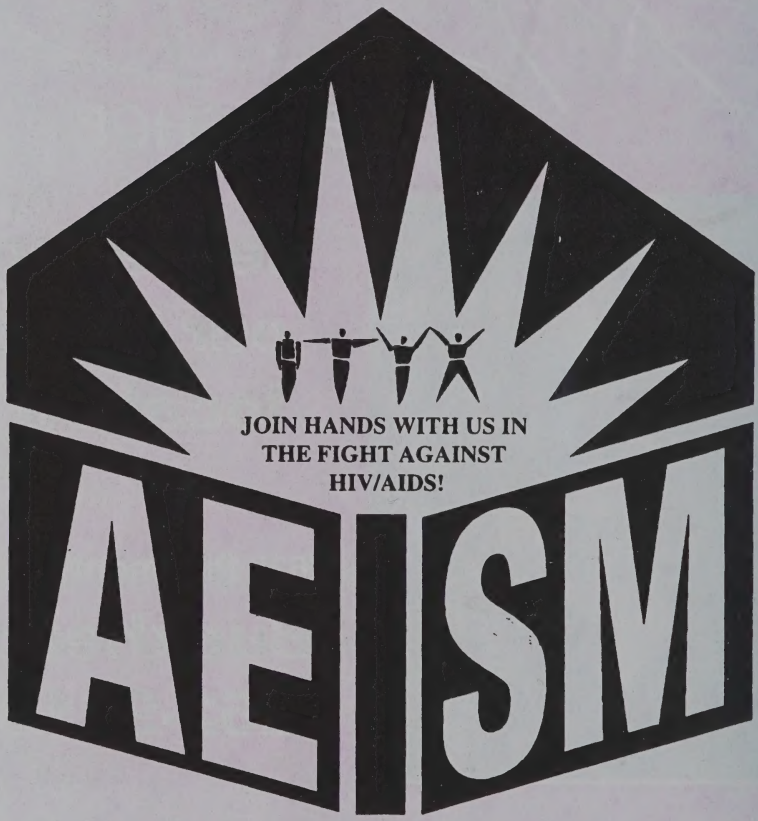

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pflag!

By Charlene Cothran

The mission of PFLAG, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, is to promote the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons, their families, and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal rights.

The international organization has 380 chapters across the U.S. and a new South Metro Chapter in Atlanta. With the deafening silence surrounding lesbian and gay children, and AIDS and HIV, African-American parents are often devastated and isolated when they first find out that a child is gay or lesbian or that a child has AIDS.

PFLAG parent Marci Haver says the South Metro area's new chapter has seen and encourages increasing participation by African-American parents seeking and giving support to one another. Marci Says, "In this Olympic year for Atlanta, it is important that we give this gift to our South Metro community: Light, where there is darkness; Courage, where there is fear; Tolerance, where there is bigotry; Love where there is hate."

Belinda Jefferson, center, is delighted that her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Hercules Jefferson, were on hand to support her at HRC's Detroit Dinner. When Mr. Jefferson was asked how he felt about his daughter being an out lesbian, he replied, "I love my daughter, and to each her own!"

According to Judy Colbs, president of Atlanta PFLAG, the Chicago chapter may be the only one in the country focusing specifically on the support and education of African-American parents and families. PFLAG National recently launched a media campaign against hate and intolerance entitled Project Open Mind. The target audience of the commercials are the millions of Americans who neither support nor express intolerance of lesbian and gay lifestyles. It is hoped that viewers will learn about the myths and lies associated with the lives of gay and lesbian Americans, and how hateful attacks, teen suicide, and anti-gay discrimination in employment and housing has been fostered by such myths and lies.

Put your parents in touch with PFLAG! Just call (404) 691-4729 or write PFLAG Atlanta/South Metro, 430 Lynhurst Dr., Atlanta, GA 30311. One day, when they grow up, they'll thank you!

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Waiting To Exhale

Arista Records has released the Waiting To Exhale soundtrack album. The record features an unprecedented powerhouse lineup of music's hottest "divas": Whitney Houston (who also stars in the film), Toni Braxton, Aretha Franklin, Mary J. Blige, TLC, Brandy, Chaka Khan, Patti LaBelle, Faith Evans, SWV, CeCe Winans, Shanna, For Real, Chante Moore, and Sonja Marie. The album was written and produced by Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, who wrote 14 new songs plus the score for the 20th Century Fox film.

The first single is by Whitney Houston. The title is "Exhale (Shoop, Shoop)," and it's a warm lilting ballad that summarizes the overall theme of the film and its soundtrack.

Ms. Houston commented: "Whenever Kenny and I get together, it clicks—it works—it's magic! All of the songs on the soundtrack speak of the friendship of the four ladies in the film. An equally talented group of ladies are on the soundtrack and I'm just so glad they agreed to do it!"

Whitney Houston's new song Exhale (Shoop Shoop) *was the first release off of "Waiting to Exhale."*

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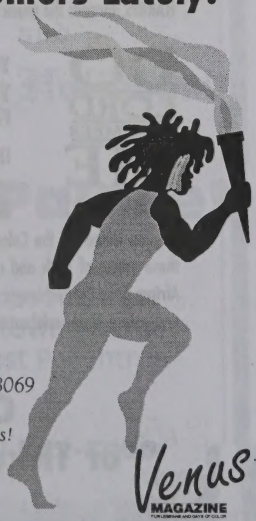


Venus MAGAZINE

Jomandi Announces an Absolutely Fabulous February 3 Shows Back to Back in Celebration of Black History Month

FRATERNITY

a political thriller...
Jomandi tops itself
Jan.26–Feb. 11

WHAT PRICE DO WE PAY FOR POWER? How do five visionary men succumb to the seductions of power and lose sight of true brotherhood? These are the questions dramatically posed by JEFF STETSON, author of "THE MEETING," in the story set in a major urban city, where a powerful Black politician must run against his own protege. With Congressional and presidential elections less than two years away, Jomandi reprises this taut political hit of the 1989–90 season. It's time for another reality check.

Trick The Devil

a blues tale in thekey of life
Feb. 23–March 10

A woman loved a man; he done her wrong; she takes up with a stranger in town who plays upon her loneliness like the blues. The stranger, Robert Johnson, is heralded as the best blues musician who ever lived. Unknown at 24 and dead at 26, Johnson developed his blues "powers" so quickly that many believed the tale he told; he'd "tricked the devil" and risked his soul to learn to play his woman stealing blues. Writer BILL HARRIS, threads the music and legend of Robert Johnson into this mystical story set in a roadside cafe.

DO LORD REMEMBER ME

you'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll remember...
Feb. 13–Feb. 17

The critics wrote of Jomandi's "Do Lord," it's "like sitting down with your grandparents...," it is "an exploration of collective memory because some things should never be forgotten." The play by JAMES DE JONGH, set in the Virginia Home for the Colored in 1936, weaves together the reminiscences of former slaves and places these voices of faith and courage against a backdrop of spirituals and visual images of modern day African-American achievers. Director Andrea Frye and members of the original cast recreate this stunning and unforgettable celebration of the generations.

Call (404) 876-6346
or Ticketmaster (404) 817-8700

PROFILE OF A QUEEN

Name:..... Krystal Towers

Age:..... 27

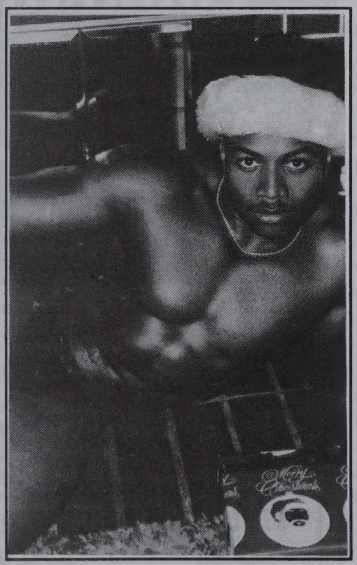
Status:..... Single

Hometown:..... Denver, Colorado

Current Titles:.. Ms. LaJazz
... Ms. Hide-n-Seek

Former Titles: .. Ms. Black Colorado
... Ms. Raven
... Ms. Cloud Nine

Ms. Krystal Towers' impeccable performances of such Divas as Whitney Houston, Phylis Hyman, RuPaul, and Millie Jackson has captivated her audiences. Currently performing in Atlanta, her 7 foot height (in 4" heels), beauty, poise and elegance sets the stage for this powerhouse. A board member of People of Color Consortium Against AIDS, she is also a community service representative for children living with AIDS.



Photography by Jamal • Brothers™

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and
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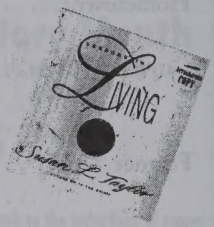
Happy Anniversary Venus!



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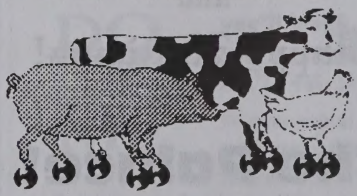

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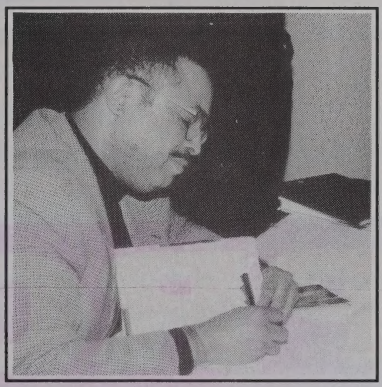
Forum announces 9th annual conference highlights

Best-selling author E. Lynn Harris will give the first major reading from his new book, "And This Too Shall Pass," at the National Black Lesbian and Gay Conference February 15-19, 1996 in Dallas, Texas.

The reading is one of several exciting events scheduled to take place at the 9th Annual Conference of the National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum, the nation's oldest and largest black lesbian and gay organization. Also at the conference, Drs. Sylvia Rhue and Dee Mosbacher and Frances Reid will screen their new film, "All God's Children," a documentary response to the radical right's homophobic efforts to exploit black churches.

Other invited guests include Harvard Professor Cornel West and former Congresswoman Barbara Jordan.

Each year, the conference brings together more than 1,000 participants from across the country in the nation's largest gathering of African American lesbians and gays to address enlightening topics that affect the community. This year's conference theme, "Black Lesbians and Gays: Continuing the Struggle," celebrates the lives, legacies and ongoing work of the African American lesbian gay, bisexual and transgender communities across the nation.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JENA JONES

E. Lynn Harris will read and sign his latest book, "And This Too Will Pass," at the Ninth Annual National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum Conference, in Dallas.

Previous conference speakers have included the Rev. Jesse Jackson, U. S. Rep. Maxine Waters, former Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, Angela Davis, Bell Hooks, Bishop Carl Bean, *Essence Magazine* Executive Editor Linda Villarosa, Cambridge, Mass. Mayor Ken Reeves, Dr. Marjorie Hill, and writer/activists Audre Lorde, Essex Hemphill, and Barbara Smith. Previous conference entertainers have included Chaka Khan, Natalie Cole, Whoopi Goldberg, Peabo Bryson, and Me'shell Ndege Ocello.

Conference topics include men's and womyn's issues, personal development, grassroots activism, HIV/AIDS, spirituality, young adult issues, leadership and public policy. Highlights of the conference include the Annual Awards Banquet and Dance and the AIDS Memorial Service.

This year's conference will be held at the Harvey Hotel Brook Hollow, 7030 N. Stemmons; Dallas, Texas 75247, and is being hosted by Dallas Ujima.

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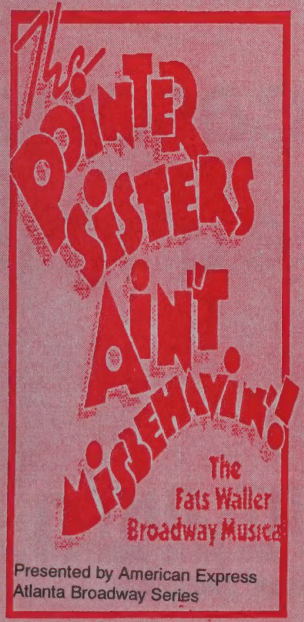
Black Arts Festival Hosts Pointers

The National Black Arts Festival (NBAF) will host the Pointer Sisters, stars of the new, international tour of *Ain't Misbehavin'*, at a gala benefit reception following the opening night performance at 8 PM on January 9, 1996. The Pointer Sisters, currently celebrating their 20th anniversary as a hit recording group, will bring their dazzling style to the Fox Theater in this Tony Award-winning musical. Directed by the show's original choreographer, Arthur Faria, *Ain't Misbehavin'* is one of the most acclaimed musicals in Broadway history, bringing to life the music of Fats Waller.

Sponsored by Wachovia Bank, the evening's gala will benefit the National Black Arts Festival's educational ArtReach Programs. Other contributing sponsors for this event include Georgia Power, KISS 104, and Venus Magazine.

Tickets for the event are $100 and $150 for individuals, and $1,500 and $3,000 for corporate and group packages. Tickets may be purchased at the NBAF Office, 236 Forsyth St. SW, Suite 400, Atlanta, GA 30303. Tickets should be reserved by December 15, 1995. For more information call (404) 730-7315.

The National Black Arts Festival, the largest event of its kind, presents the work of artists of African descent in music, dance, theater, film, folk art, visual art, literature, and performance art, biennially in Atlanta, Georgia. The next NBAF will be June 28 - July 7, 1996. Sponsors of the NBAF include Wachovia Bank, the Fulton County Arts Council, The Miller Brewing Co., Coca-Cola Company, AT&T, Delta Air Lines, Atlanta Journal Constitution, TBS, Rich's, BellSouth, Health Quest Magazine and the City of Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs.



The Board of Directors
of the
National Black Arts Festival
invites you to an
Opening Night Gala
"Ain't Misbehavin!"
starring the
Pointer Sisters
January 9, 1995 at 8:00 PM
The Fabulous Fox Theatre

Performance and Opening Night Reception with the Pointer Sisters following the show.

Individuals: $100 to $150

Reserve tickets by callin
(404) 730-7315
Deadline December 27, 199.

National Black Arts Festival

Gala Sponsors: Wachovi. Bank; KISS 104; Venus Magazine; Georgia Power.

Happy Anniversary Venus!

Seasons Greetings!

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OUT & about

The women of Trikone, Atlanta's South Asian gay and lesbian organization gathered at Emory University in honor of Audre Lorde.

Film directors Ada-Gay Griffin and Michelle Parkerson cuttin' up with the premiere women of ZAMI following "A Litany for Survival," a film on Audre Lorde

Members of Adobi Muse and guest poets read the works of Essex Hemphill during an Atlanta Memorial

PHOTOGRAPH BY SUSAN J. ROSS

Publisher Charlene Cothran and Actor/Artistic Director of the National Black Arts Festival Avery Brooks at the NBAF's Kick-off Party earlier this year.

CONFERENCES

Ninth Annual National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Foundation Conference, Dallas Texas. February 15–19, 1996. Call (213) 964-7820 for more information.

CONGRATULATIONS

Happy Anniversary

Craig and Leonardo. The couple will celebrate 4 years on December 18.

Happy Birthday

and Happy New Year to John Cartwright, Front doorman, Karats Rhythm & Blues, whose grand entrance was 12-31-66.

DANCE

body and soul

at Atlanta's Fabulous Fox Theatre February 1–4. Showtimes 2PM and 8PM. Prices $10–$38. Call TicketMaster at 404/817-8700 for tickets.

The Cuban National Folkloric Dance Ensemble. Feb. 13 at 8PM at Atlanta's Fabulous Fox Theatre in association with the National Black Arts Festival.

GALLERY OPENINGS

Sistagraphy proudly presents the exhibition

"Who HE?"

a showing of recent photographic works by Warren O Fletcher. The show continues through January 5, 1996 at Studio 658, 658 Whitehall Street, SW, Atlanta by appointment. Call 404/584-0409 for more information.

MEETINGS

Home But Not Alone, AIDS Survival Project, The Living Room and AID Atlanta will host a housing forum,

"HIV and Housing Options"

Friday, January 26, 1996 from 8:30 AM to 12 noon for all case managers, Discharge planners, social workers, housing providers, and insurance specialists. Facilitators are Jim Sacco, MSW, LCSW and Mary Jane Lubinski. Call Rita 875-7881, ext. 27.

The next meeting for **Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD/ Atlanta)** is scheduled for Sun., Jan. 7, 1996, 7 to 9 PM at the GLAAD office at 828 W. Peachtree, 2nd floor. (404) 876-1398.

Annual Holiday Pride Meeting

The community is invited to attend the annual holiday Pride meeting to be held December 21 at 7 PM at the Atlanta Marriott Northeast in the DeKalb Room, 2000 Century Blvd., NE (404/325-0000), and the new location for all Atlanta Pride meetings. Besides festive refreshments, the evening's events include the selection of the 1996 Atlanta Pride logo representing the Pride theme "People of the World: Listen, Think, Act" and discussion of upcoming Pride events including the first (but not only) **volunteer kickoff party on January 21 at Fat Tuesdays in Buckhead.**

Black Gay Pride

general meeting, Sunday, January 7, 1996 at Karat's Rhythm & Blues, 511 Peachtree Street, 6 PM.

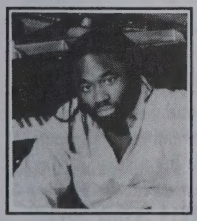
MUSIC

Ain't Misbehavin'

with the Pointer Sisters January 9–14. Call (404) 730-7315 for ticket information.

The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra presents Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute Concert with Yoel Levi conducting and Terrence Wilson, piano. Jan. 11–13, 8PM. Call (404) 733-4800.

The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and dynamic pianist Awadagin Pratt will perform the effervescent Piano Concerto No. 4 by Saint-Saëns Jan. 25–26 at 8PM. Call (404) 733-4800 for tickets.



NEW YEAR'S EVE

Blue Jeans/ Black Tie

New Year's Eve Affair by Green Eyes Production. Sunday, December 31, 1995. $20. 10 PM–3 AM. Baltimore. 997-9443.

CELEBRATE KWANZAA

with Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church's Kwanzaa Celebration for Brothers and Sisters in the Life. Featuring Drummers, Dancers, Cultural Presentations and a Pot Luck Meal. 2:30 PM. Virginia-Highland Baptist Church, 743 Virginia Ave., NE, Atl. 404/388-4624. Bring a covered dish.

Fourth Annual

Sparkle Nite

"Pre" New Years Eve Blow out, NY Hosted by Rachel & Co. (718) 842-2929.

E.U.N.I.C.E. presents a

Silk & Satin New Year's Eve Weekend

Saturday & Sunday, December 30 and 31, 1995.at the Fabulous Valley Forge Sheraton Hotel, 1160 First Avenue, King of Prussia, PA. Weekend package features three days/two nights hotel accommodations. $75 per person. NO Tickets sold at door. For more information call 215-242-4255.

Simplicity Attractions Unlimited of Baltimore in association with Nefertiti Productions and Entertainment, LTD, presents

The Interstate Champagne Charity Ball

on Saturday April 13, 1996 from 10 PM to 3 AM. Semi-formal. Open Bar 10 PM - 12 AM. Savory hors d'oeuvres, unique entertainment, midnight Champagne Toast, dancing. A Pre-Ball Party will be Friday, April 12, 1996 from 10 PM to 3 AM. At Days Inn, 2700 New York Avenue NE, Washington, DC. Advance Sales only, 440 a person. Contact Bess Knowings, Chairperson (718) 992-9073.

PARTIES

Simplicity Attractions Unlimited of New York invites you to a

Gala New Year's Eve Celebration

on Sunday, December 31, from 10 PM to 3 AM at 19955-99 Westerchester Ave., Bronx, NY. Catered by Kismet Caterers, there will be a buffet, open bar, champagne, and party favors for a donation of $50 a person. No tickets will be sold at the door. For tickets and/or information contact Bess Knowings (718) 992-9073.

RALLY

First Annual Bayard Rustin King Day Rally. Monday, January 15, 1996. 12 Noon. Downtown Atlanta. Assemble at the parking lot of Velvets (John Wesley Dobbs Avenue. Take MARTA to the Peachtree center Station, Exit at Georgia Pacific Bulding.)

RECEPTIONS

The National Black Arts Festival salutes the 1st Anniversary Celebration of Venus Magazine Sunday, January 14, 1995, 6:30 PM sharp at Karats Rhythm & Blues, 511 Peachtree St., downtown Atlanta. No cover before 8 PM.

National Black Arts Festival

Live entertainment will follow the introduction of the Venus staff, the unveiling of commissioned art work, and the introduction of national dignitaries. Join us!

Jomandi presents the Langston Hughes holiday classic

Black Nativity

December 15-23 at the Georgia Tech Center for the Arts, 349 Ferst St. Tickets from Jomandi 876-6340; Ticketmaster Arts line 817-8700; or Georgia Tech Center for the Arts, 894-9600. Directed by Marsha A. Jackson, choreographed by Patdro Harris, music and vocal direction by Keith Wilson and Sheila Strout.

FOR YOUR EYES

the only gay female adult Entertainment Party ever, will be December 17 at Club Outa Control (next door to Loretta's), 688 Spring Street. Doors open at 9 PM. Cover: $5, Table dance: $5 in VIP Room). ID required.

The National Black Arts festival (NBAF) will host the

POINTER SISTERS

stars of the new, international tour of *Ain't Misbehavin'*, at a gala benefit reception following the opening night performance at 8 PM on January 9, 19;96. tickets for the event are $100 and $150 for individuals, and $1,500 and $3,000 for corporate and group packages. Tickets may be purchased at the National Black arts Festival office, 236 Forsyth St., Suite 400, Atlanta, GA 30303. For more information call (404) 730-7315.

SIGNINGS

April Sinclaire will sign her latest book,

"Ain't Gonna Be The Same Fool Twice"

at Outwrite Bookstore, 931 Monroe Drive, Tues., Jan. 23. 12 Noon. Sinclaire is also author of "Coffee Will Make You Black."

THEATER

John Amos in

Halley's Comet

at Atlanta's Fabulous Fox Theatre Feb. 5 at 8PM in association with the National Black Arts Festival.

Seven Stages Presents

School House Rocks

with Freddie Hendricks Youth Ensemble of Atlanta Jan. 15, 18–21, 24–28, 31 and Feb. 1–4, 7–11. Call (404) 523-7647.

Jomandi's

FRATERNITY

What price shall we pay for power? Jan. 26–Feb. 11. 14th Street Playhouse. (404) 876-6346 for information.

The Whole World Theatre presents

Pimps, Queens, & Dope Fiends Christmas Special

every Friday and Saturday night beginning November 10 through December 23. It's a sexy X-Mas filled with merriment... and miracles. 9 PM 1214 Spring Street. $10. Call 404-817-PLAY for reservations.

ORGANIZATIONS

Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

Abundant Grace Community Church—743 Virginia Ave., Sunday worship–7:30 PM. (404) 815-0036.

ADODI New York—A self-supporting organization of gay and bisexual men of African Heritage. 432 West 43rd St, Ste. 8045, N.Y., N.Y. 10036

African Ancestral Lesbian United for Societal Changed (Formerly Salsa Soul)—(212) 620-7310. Candice.

African American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA)—(404) 908-7371.

AIDS Education Services for Minorities (AESM)—P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, GA 30337. (404) 753-2900 or (404) 743-7733.

AIDS Response Knoxville—Suite 411, 109 Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919, (615) 450-2437.

AIDS Services in Asian Communities, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 212, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1938

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church—575 Boulevard. Sunday, 7 PM, evenings, 8:30 PM, (404) 622-1154.

Atlanta Lambda Center, Inc.—P.O. Box 15180, Atlanta, GA 30333. (404) 662-9010.

A. Lorde Collective—African-American Lesbians Organized to Renew Dignity and Empowerment. Hotline: (313) 862-3396.

AYA Institute—dedicated to the education and mental health of our community. P.O. Box 3824, Jersey City, N.J. 07303-3824 or (201) 451-3412.

Bisexual Womyn of Colour—BIWOC since 1991. P.O. Box 020136, Brooklyn, NY 11202-136. (212) 479-7886. Donna Reddy, pres.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. (BLGP Inc.)—Box 7184, Washington, DC. 20024.

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum—1219 S. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 964-7820. FAX (213) 964-7830.

Black & White Men Together—POB 1334, Atl., GA 30301-1334. (404) 892-BWMT.

Black Lesbians with Children—Erica Forbes 286-0842

Black Women's Network—Box 5, 136 Kingsland Height St., London, England, UK/E8/2NS

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)—Meets every Friday at 8 PM at the Amassi Center. 3419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA. For more info, call Ms. Clydis (510) 649-0536.

BLUeS—Bronx Lesbians United in Sisterhood, Event Organization. (212) 330-9196

Boyz of Distinction—P.O. Box 78091, Atl., GA 30532.

Brothers Back-2-Back, Inc.—An African American HIV/AIDS Organization, P.O. Box 11366, Atlanta, GA 30310. Voice: (404) 593-5805.

Chicago Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays—(312) 871-2117.

Cinnamon Productions—Womyn of Color event organizers. (718) 994-0028.

Creation Woman—poets/artists & affiliates meet last Sun. each month. (310) 422-1970.

D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men and Bisexuals—(202) 388-8078.

Dyfferent Gyrl Production—P.O. Box 13346, Atlanta, GA 30324. (404) 908-5340.

Friend of Friends—(301) 735-5023; P.O. Box 77075, Washington, D.C. 20013

GALAEI (for Latino gay men), 1233 Locust St., 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 985-3382

Gay and Out Productions—P.O. Box 111, Clarkston, GA 30021-0111. (404) 299-7809

Gay Black Female (GBF)—6312 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 114, Hollywood, CA 90028. (310) 288-6315.

The Gay and Lesbian Center—208 W. 13th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011.

Gay/Lesbian Latino/a Community Organization Out Reach, Inc.—(404) 346-3922 or (800) 441-2437.

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teacher's Network—P.O. Box 5512, Atlanta, Georgia 31107. (404) 872-4320.

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)—2103 N. Decatur Rd., Suite 190, Decatur, GA 30033. PH: (404) 377-4258. EM: info@gabc.gaypride.com

Home Free Ministry—P.O. Box 688, Atl., GA 30301. (404) 818-2033.

Hospitality Atlanta—(404) 627-1630.

International Black Writers & Artists—meet 2nd Sunday Bladwin Hills/Crenshaw (213) 964-3721.

Lambda Car Club/Dogwood Region—(404) 901-9447, POB 11705, Atl., GA 30355.

Las Buenas Amigas—(212) 868-7816. Carmen, The Gay & Lesbian Center, 208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011.

Latinos En Accion—Youth support group. P.O. Box 15388, Atlanta, GA 30325. (404) 621-5743. Yolanda Leeky, (404) 753-2840.

Lesbians Latinos en Nuestro Ambiente—(707) 292-7705.

LLEGO, National Latino/a Lesbian & Gay Organization—P.O. Box 44483, Wash., DC. 20026.

Malebox—Meeting black men. P.O. Box 75392, Wash., D.C. 20013.

Minority AIDS Project of Philly and Vicinity, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 218, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1937

MOCAA (Men of Color Against AIDS)—Boston, MA. (617) 442-3800

National Assoc. of Black & White Men Together—1747 Connecticut Ave., Washington, DC. 20020. (202) 462-3599.

National Black Women's Health Project—1237 Gordon, Street S.W., Atlanta, GA (404) 758-9590.

Night of the Black Independents—A film production society. 830-A Eastwood Ave., Atl., GA 30316. (404) 627-9900.

Our Cousin's House—An African American AIDS Organization. 1023 Dill Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30310. (404) 756-9202.

ONYX/Chicago—Leather Social Club for Men of Color and their friends. 1340 W. Irving Park Road, Suite 188, Chicago IL 60613.

Positive Black Lesbians United (PBLU)—P.O. Box 655, Avondale Estates, GA 30002. (404) 250-7950.

Pink Triangle Productions—Gay Female Entertainment Party Source. (770) 723-7292.

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Q-GLU—Queens Gays & Lesbians United. (718) 639-4951.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church—Box 50047, Atl., GA 30302. (404) 388-4624.

SAGE—Senior Action in a Gay Environment. (212) 741-2247.

SALGA—South Asian Lesbian Gay Association; P.O. Box 50, Cooper Station, NY, NY 10276-0050; (212) 294-2550; Email: salganyc@dorsai.org

Second Sunday Discussion Group—POB 1574, Decatur, GA 30031. (404) 629-0583.

Shades of Brown—Professional Womyn/Men of Color. (212) 439-1024.

Sisters of 30 Something Special—(404) 997-6240.

Sister Love, Inc.—(404) 753-7733, (404) 753-1500.

Sophisticated Ladies—Lesbian Group for Mature Women of Color. (202) 788-1866.

Southern Conference of Black Gay Men—P.O. Box 212421, Columbia S.C. 29221

Spelman College Lesbian Bi-Sexual Alliance—710 Peachtree St., Suite 126, Atlanta, GA 30308. (404) 908-5368.

The ADODI MUSE—a black gay male literary group; 348 Berean Ave. S.E., Atlanta, Ga 30312. (404) 521-2515.

The COLOURS Organization, Inc.—201 S. 12th., Ste. 1R, Phila. PA 19107. Education, prevention and support programs for sexual minority people of color. For more information, please contact (215) 627-6233.

The Men's Gathering—P.O. Box 190869, Dallas, Texas 75219-0869,(214) 521-5342, ext. 876. Meeting times: 4th Friday of each month, 7 pm

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Unity, Inc. (for African American gay men), 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 214, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1876

Viva!—Lesbian and Gay Latino Arts Organization. (310) 301-8035.

Women in the Life—D.C.'s Black Lesb. party hotline. (202) 667-8078.

Women of Color Breast Cancer Survivors Support Project—8610 S. Sepulveda Blvd, Ste 200, L.A., CA 90045 (310) 216-3200.

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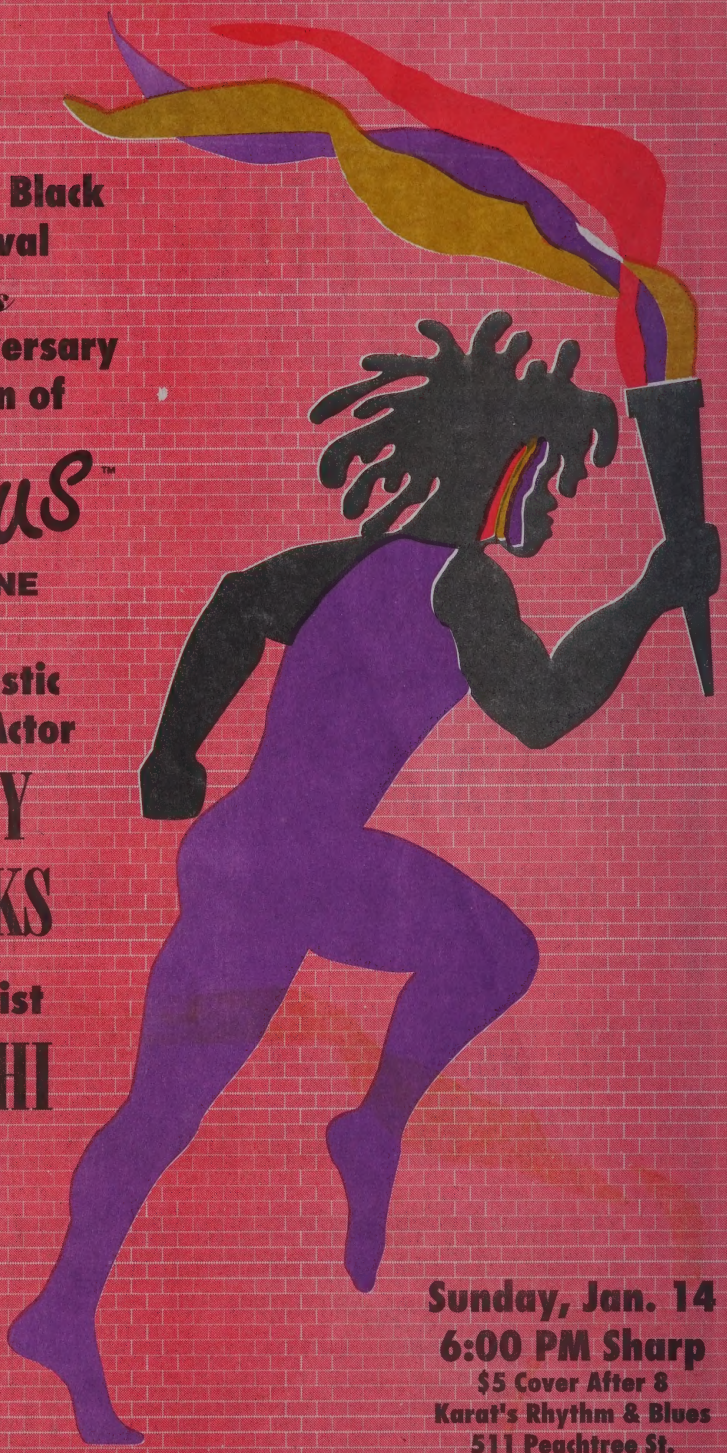

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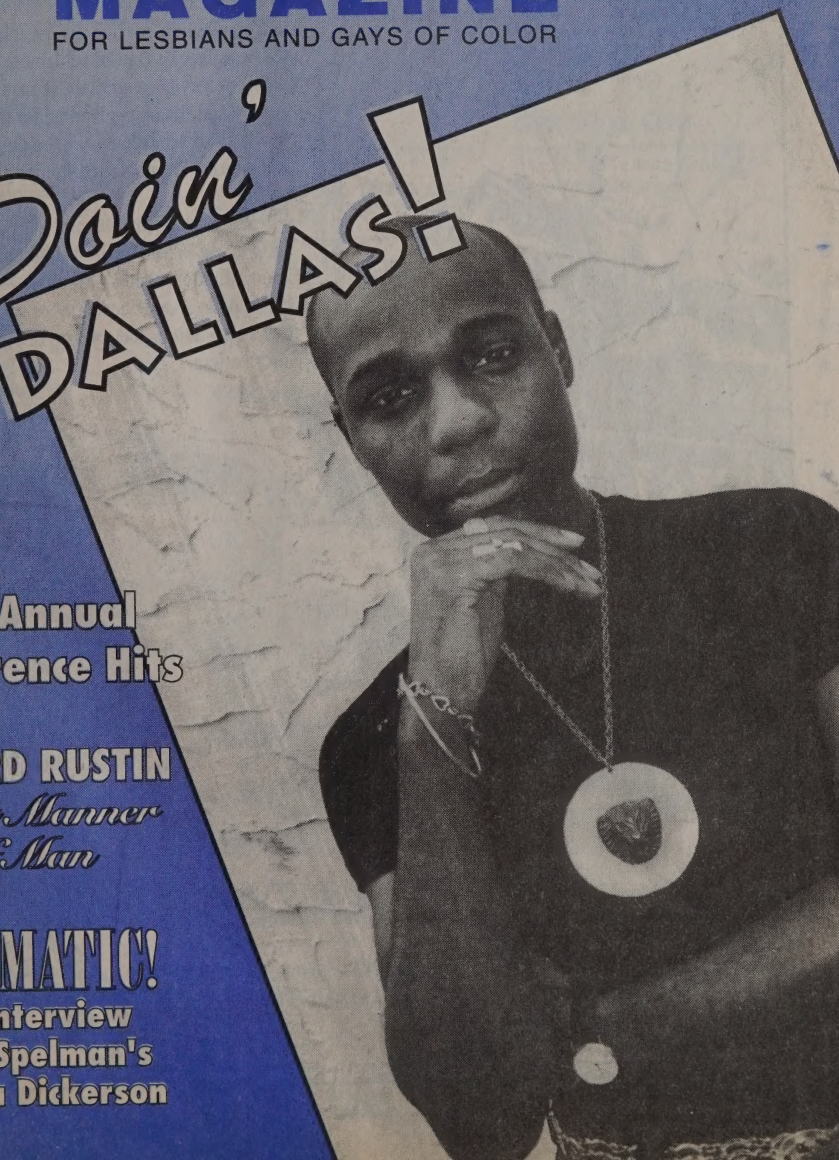

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LETTERS

DEAR EDITOR,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and membership of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum and the AIDS Prevention Team, we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Venus Magazine on its one year anniversary. For the past year, Venus Magazine has provided bridges of information across which Lesbian and Gay Men of African descent have connected and learned about one another and the challenges we face.

Venus Magazine has informed and provoked as well as entertained, and we look forward to our continuing relationship as Black Lesbian and Gay Men prepare to enter the 21st Century.

Continued success to you and Venus Magazine!

Yours in the Struggle,

Vallerie D. Wagner
Gregory J. May

DEAR EDITOR,

I want to take this time to thank you for pulling together such an important and long overdue tribute to Bayard Rustin during this past celebration march for the late Rev. Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.

The strength of the rally for me was the willingness and consciousness of those Black lesbian and gay men who came, not only to pay homage to a very dear and great man, Bayard Rustin, but to march in the streets of Atlanta, Georgia, proclaiming our blackness, gayness and our power of unity.

Louise Covington
Atlanta, Ga.

DEAR EDITOR,

I can't thank you enough for coming up with this ultra fabulous brainstorm of an idea to honor Bayard Rustin. I never felt so involved with the march before like this last one. This has truly been the best MLK holiday for me yet!

Marlin Knapp,
Atlanta, Ga

DEAR EDITOR:

First and foremost I need to express my awe and amazement in your publication, for Venus Magazine is a true asset to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered community here in Atlanta.

As a gay white male, of European heritage, I personally feel no connection to any group outside of the gay community that one might call a "culture". For me leads to the feeling our community is my culture. While I myself draw great strength from the leaders of the gay rights movement, both past and present. I in no way ignore other civil rights leaders.

About the Martin Luther King March, I personally am very excited with the idea of gay and lesbian inclusion in this important event. For many members of our community, the idea of a separate spot in the march for the "queer" community is important, but not vital. I agree with and support the idea that African-American people demand a place at the family table. For many people of color, they are African-American first, and gay, lesbian, or bisexual second. Although this view may not sit well with many members of the community, I still feel it is a valid view. The invisibility of gay and lesbian people of color is a myth that needs to be broken.

Owen Dean Edwards,
Jonesboro, Ga.

From The Editor

As we celebrate Black History Month in February and Women's History Month in March, do consider how important it is to document ourselves as Gays and Lesbians of Color. This doesn't mean that you have to be a writer, poet or photographer.

It simply means saving and taking special care of those things which serve to notify and inform us.

For example, flyers and invitations to monthly or annual events are wonderful items for you or your organization to place in a scrapbook. These items, along with snap shots and news clippings will help remind us of special times when we're old (and we will get old if we keep living).

More importantly, a younger generation, sure to be more proud and out than some of us, will be educated and empowered (or at least tickled) by the history we leave behind. Besides, 50 years from now we wouldn't want "the children" to think that they are the first to ever party at Red Top Mountain or to organize a Black Gay and Lesbian History Program on campus, or to visit a local Black church as an OUT organization.

Who knows, maybe we're not the first to do any of these things either. As long as we proclaim our place in history, we sure enough won't be the last!

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February–March 1996
Vol. 2., No. 3

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FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

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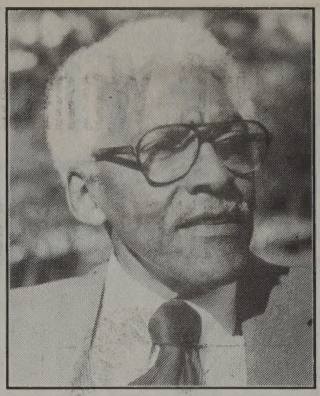

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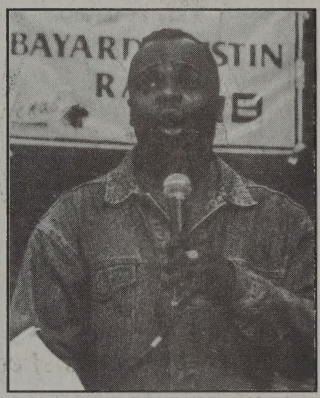
Bayard Rustin



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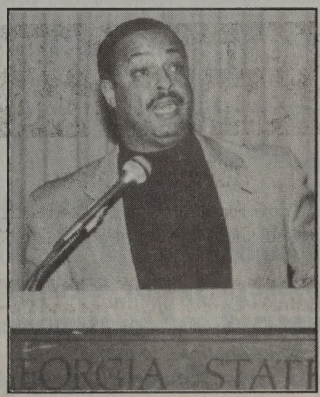
Black History



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WHAT *manner of* MAN ?

A Bayard Rustin Story

by Charlene Cothran

During the Martin Luther King National Holiday weekend my partner and I walked hand-in-hand past the dais table of the King Center's 1996 Salute to Greatness Dinner. Seated with their respective spouses and other guests were Jesse Jackson, John Johnson of Johnson Publishing; former ambassador Andrew Young; Sister-Dr. Johnetta Cole, president of Spelman College; and the recipient of the Salute to Greatness Award, Leron Bennett, Jr., executive editor of Ebony magazine. As we approached our table I politely helped Marian with her chair then took my seat. I can't ever remember being more proud to be OUT.

I hope that Mr. Bennett won't mind that I've borrowed the title of his King biography "What Manner of Man" to describe another great man upon whose shoulders Dr. King was able to stand. This great man is BAYARD RUSTIN.

Credited as the architect of the 1963 March on Washington, Rustin worked for over 20 years before that historic event to end racial discrimination in the armed forces.

Bayard Rustin and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the home of Dr. Arthur C. Logan. Courtesy of the Bayard Rustin Fund, Inc.

In 1941, Rustin, under the guidance of A. Phillip Randolph worked to organize a march on Washington by 100,000 black people. Just six days before the threatened march, President Roosevelt issued an executive order prohibiting discrimination in the defense industry and in government, and created the Fair Employment Practice Commission to enforce the order. Blacks having won this important victory, then began to see the great potential offered by such nonviolent action.

In 1947, while riding the bus in a small southern town, Rustin refused to take a seat in the back of the bus. In the same year, long

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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Bayard Rustin and A. Philip Randolph in 1971

before the emergence of a gay pride movement, Rustin felt strongly that it was necessary for his own personal growth to come out of the closet as a gay man.

He declared " The only way I could be a free, whole person was to face the shit."

Rustin reflected during a 1987 *Village Voice* article about specific incidents when his being gay became an issue for other civil rights leaders during the 1960's.

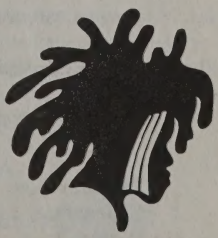
"Actually, [A. Philip] Randolph asked me to organize the marches. I decided that Mr. Randolph ought to get Dr. King to join us, on the simple principle that the other civil rights leaders would then feel that they had to join in. Dr. King was at the press conference announcing the marches, and then left for Brazil. Later he called me from Brazil very,very agitated indeed, and said that on second thought maybe we ought not to proceed with the marches. At that point, he did not tell me why, straightforwardly. I went to see Mr. Randolph, and asked him to give me permission to say to Dr. King that he was very sorry, but that he and others were going to go ahead anyhow. I thought that Dr. King would have no choice but to stay in.

"I called Martin back and told him this, whereupon he told me the whole story. A woman who was well known in the movement had called him and said that [Congressman Adam Clayton] Powell was going to call a press conference and implicate me and Dr. King in some sort of liaison if Dr. King did not call off the marches. Now, obviously this is a case where Powell had been promised something by the Democratic Party if he'd get rid of me. Dr. King asked for a delay. I said we couldn't afford to delay. In the end, he decided to go ahead and Powell did not go to the press. This is the kind of thing that Adam did."

"Dr. King came from a very protected background. I don't think he'd ever known a gay person in his life. I think he had no real sympathy or understanding. I think he wanted very much to. But I think he was largely guided by two facts. One was that already people were whispering about him. And I think his attitude was, look, I've got enough of my own problems. I really don't want to be burdened with additional ones. Secondly, he was surrounded by people who, for their own reasons, wanted to get rid of me—Andrew Young in particular, and Jesse Jackson. Definitely not because I was gay but because we didn't agree on some issues—whether or not King should go north to Chicago, and also the Poor People's Campaign."

Bayard Rustin continued his fight for blacks for many years and went on to serve as director of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute in New York City. He also later lent his voice to the Gay movement addressing many groups including the sixth anniversary of Black and White Men Together in Boston in 1986.

Village Voice, *June, 1987, "Time on Two Crosses," an interview with Bayard Rustin by George Chauncey, Jr. and Lisa Kennedy.*



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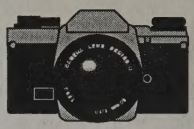

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BLACK GAY PRIDE Atlanta

The vision became a reality in Atlanta, Labor Day weekend 1995. Black Gay Pride Atlanta, (BGPA), was born into a large southern Family of gorgeous black gay men and lovely lesbian sisters. Traditionally, we visit other Family in Washington D.C. on Memorial Day and in Los Angeles during the fourth of July weekend. This year, however, the greatest Family Reunion of all will take place after the Olympics in Atlanta, August 30-September 2,1996.

An enthusiastic and experienced advisory board has already begun to lay the ground work for the organization and festivities. Co-chairs Warren Williams and Marcia [Queen) Bailey McComb,both newcomers to Atlanta, bring excitement and fresh ideas from their experiences with other Black Gay Pride organizations.

Warren volunteered his services to the BLGPD,Inc. committee in D.C. for three consecutive years as a member of the Public Relations committee, and chair for the Development and Finance committee.

Queen brings a wealth of experience from Baltimore's Black Gay Pride Events and currently serves as community liaison for the Atlanta Gay Pride committee. Queen feels that as African-American gays and lesbians we must begin to build coalition from within. " It somehow seems that each black gay or lesbian organization here in Atlanta is content to work alone with it's own handful of supporters. My goal is to secure a commitment from each organization to send at least one delegate to the planning table."

"We urge you to join us lend your talent and gifts, to see the vision of unity."

Warren also believes in community interaction. "Black Gay Pride Atlanta will not only be an event to come together and have fun, but to also use this opportunity to learn more about each other as African-American lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and trans-gendered people." Warren continues, "We urge you to join us, lend your talent and gifts, to see the vision of unity." He says, "we need individuals who can lay out plans and execute them as well as those who can fold letters and lick stamps; all hands and mind are valued."

Anyone interested in making a voluntary contribution to the organization please contact Black Gay Pride Atlanta's Pride Line at 404-872-6410.

Venus Magazine #1

FIRST ANNIVERSARY PARTY

at karats rhythm and blues

PHOTO: JENA P. JONES

Venus Staff Writers/Advisors: (l to r) Douglas Jones, Craig Washington, Roderick Linzie, Ph.D., Charlene Cothran, Leonard Jack, Jr., Ph.D., Badili Jones and Tony Daniels.

PHOTO: JENA P. JONES

Standing: (l to r) Sandy Lark, Mandy Carter, Gail Booker, Joan Garner, Joy Barnes, Nancy Mitchell, Dorinda Henry, Doris Harris. Sitting: (l to r) June Washington, Marian Farrah, Charlene Cothran.

PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name: . . . . . Dorinda G. Henry

Age: 30

Status: . . . . . In a Relationship

Career: . . . . . Student, Religious and Theological; Board, NAACP Seattle Chapter

Hometown: . . . Lubbock, Texas

Latest Book: . . "Born of a Woman," by Bishop John Shelby Spong

PHOTO: E. BENNETT/SOUTHERN VOICE

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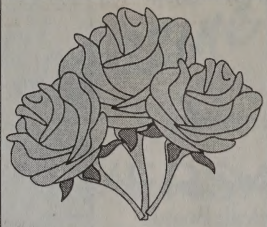

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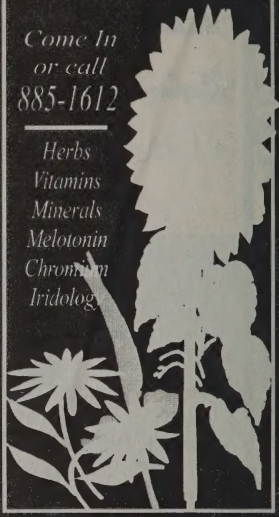

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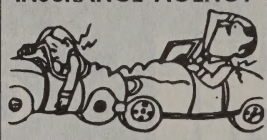

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Dramatic!

An Interview with Glenda Dickerson

By Eve Wernicky

Protagonist (Glenda) enters stage left and gracefully glides toward center stage. Spotlight fades in slowly as she gazes a little above eye level into the audience. Her hands clasped together.

(Boldly) You don't have to walk that road—I have already walked that road for you. (Applause)

That road; the road less traveled by; is the road that Glenda Dickerson has helped pave. In a world where the reality of the "black female director" is virtually non-existent to the masses—save for choreographer/director Debbie Allen—Dickerson is one of a handful of directors that according to her peers and the critics, has mastered the craft.

Dickerson, 51, Professor and Chair of Drama and Dance at Spelman College, has directed the likes of Angela Bassett, Lynn Whitfield, Cicely Tyson, and —ironically—Allen herself.

PHOTO: JENA P. JONES

Among her most popular work is the Emmy award-winning "Wine in the Wilderness" and "For My People" which earned a Peabody Award.

Dickerson studied drama at Howard University and later earned a master's degree from Adelphi University.

After becoming disillusioned with the "cattle call" auditioning process actors go through, she formed the New York based theater company TOBA (Tough on Black Actors) in the 1960's.

From then until now, she has traveled all over and racked up her repertoire, having directed more than 50 dramatic and musical productions on and off-Broadway.

This season at Spelman College. Dickerson has put together an homage to working women called, "Women at Work: Spelman Theater Constructs a Glory Hallelujah Season."

The next play in the season is Josefina Lopez's "Real Women Have Curves," which explores the lives of five overweight African-Cuban women working in a steamy, family-run seamstress shop in Miami. It opens at Spelman College on February 16. Call (404)215-7805 for more information.

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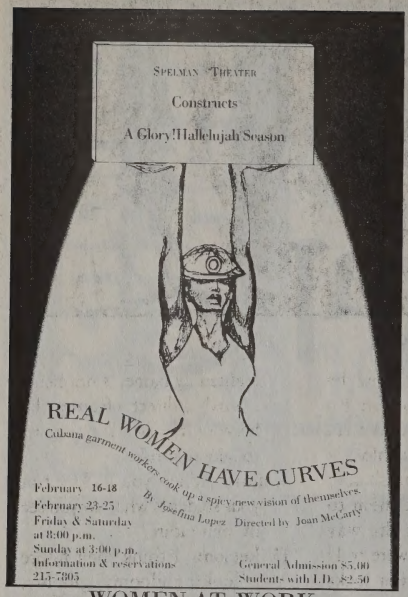

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Venus: Why did you pick this play for the series?

Dickerson: Well, the women start out feeling very bad about themselves because they are poor, fat, and alien. The protagonist, a writer, goes through a journey of discovery because she looks down on these women but later finds the strength and courage these women have.

Also, March is Women's Month and we will be screening films and have three-in residence artists creating works that will be shown. Among these artists is renowned choreographer and performer Blondell Cummings.

Venus: You had such an impressive career as a director. Why teach?

Dickerson: Teaching is important because it is your immortality. The only way to be immortal is to pass on what we know; all of our knowledge; to expose them to some of the pain we went through so they could have a voice.

Venus: What is the most difficult thing about directing?

Dickerson: The most difficult thing is to try and fill the psychological vacuum of the characters. It is difficult to try to avoid a play being flat, being about people saying words.

Venus: What is the most rewarding thing?

Dickerson: The process. I love rehearsals more than the performances themselves. The process is magical, it is like creating a tasty stew.

Venus: Are you very hands-on or do you pull back and allow all sorts of improvisation?

Dickerson: I think I'm both very hands-on and very open to improvisation. I allow the actors to make their own discovery. I allow them to use their own physical comfort. I can't tell them, 'Scratch your head here." I ask them to react to the lines the way they would if they were truly saying them, or else it looks and sounds fake.

PHOTO: JENA P. JONES

The Spelman Drama Actors

Venus: You certainly have directed some heavy-hitters. Who has been the most joyful actor to direct?

Dickerson: I think Angela Bassett, because she was very young, valid, and rooted. even now, with all that has happened to her, she remains very real, very regular.

Venus: You were once an actor yourself. Why did you feel it was important to direct and what is your take on why there are so few black female directors?

Dickerson: Directors are in a power position. Actors are like slaves on the auction block. I encourage all my students to become directors. Because the film industry is defined by white gay males, throwing women of color in the mix is seen as threatening. Look at the biggest films out there; action films. These are the adolescent fantasies realized by name, is not being offered to direct a feature film because the pack is not going to take that risk.

Venus: When you look out at your students what do you see in their future?

Dickerson: I think their future is looking gloomy, gloomy, gloomy. We are living in a generation that is drastically conservative—to the point that the National Endowment of the Arts is at the point of demise. However, I'm optimistic that more independent film productions and theater groups will continue to grow.

Venus: In preparing for this interview, a common word that came up next to your name was "diva." What constitutes a diva in your view?

Dickerson: I think a diva is grand in the old sense of the word. I think a diva is dramatic in presentation. Women who are the center of their own discourse, who are not afraid to let the chips fall where they may.

Venus: So are you a diva?

Dickerson; Of course. (Fade to black)

Eve Wernicky is a freelance writer who contributes regularly to Venus

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PROFILE OF A MAN

Name: . . . . . Warren M. Williams

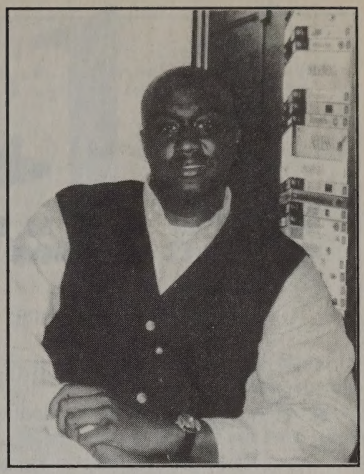
Age: 28

Status: . . . . . Single

Career: . . . . . Software Support Analyst

Hometown: . . Washington, D.C.

Latest Book: . "The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother"



Warren relocated to Atlanta last year and is currently co-chair of Black Gay Pride Atlanta '96. He is an enthusiastic leader who has served on D.C.'s BGP committee as chair of Development and Finance for three consecutive years.

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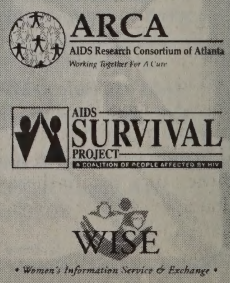

The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

Beginning February 15, the **American Cancer Society** will offer a support group for gays and lesbians with cancer and another support group for their significant others and families. The groups will meet the third Thursday of each month at 6PM in the Society's headquarters. Call 404/841-0550 for more information.

The Human Rights Campaign will hold its annual dinner on May 4, 1996 at the Atlanta Regency Hyatt's newly expanded ballroom. The dinner theme is "Envision Equality" in keeping with the mission of HRC which is to expand the organization's base and position itself as much more than a fund. HRC has a new look and logo—an equal sign symbolizing its mission to "envision an America where lesbian and gay people are ensured of their basic rights—and can be open, honest and safe at home, at work, and in the community.

Conference Call. . . "Keep Your Head To The Sky: Queers Of Color Coming Together" is the theme of a conference, called "to develop strategies and combine our strength as Communities of Color to combat hate, discrimination, and oppression." The event unfolds April 19, 1996, at Ohio State University, Columbus. Organizers are seeking presentation/ workshop proposals AND "technoqueers to spread news of the conference everywhere." Contact: Diversity of Ohio, tel. 614-486-5664, e-mail sharifax@aol.com

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Did You Tape Wigwood? ACT UP/Atlanta seeks videotape and photos of Wigwoods past. Share your wiggy memories with us! Call ACT UP @ 404-874-6782 or write to 828 W. Peachtree Street, N.W. Suite 206A, Atlanta, GEORGIA 30308-1146. Wigwood '96 will be on Saturday, May 18.

What!! No Red Top for '96? Red Top Mountain—Memorial Day Weekend an outdoor event on Lake Alatoona near Atlanta has been attended by as many as 2,000 African American Lesbians & their friends over the past 5 years. The special celebration, sponsored by Hospitality Atlanta, has been diverted from the facility this year. Hospitality Atlanta advised (by the Park Service) that the size of the group, although festive and violence free, has put a traffic burden on the Park and its staff. Alternate events are now being planned. Watch for announcements of activities for that weekend in Venus and in the forthcoming mailings. Remember, the Spirit never dies. Come join us in Atlanta, May 24-27.

The Second Annual Georgia Ride for a Cure will be held Sept. 6-8, 1996, from Augusta, Georgia to Atlanta. For information on riding, volunteering, donating time/money/ equipment/supplies, or corporate sponsorships; call ACT UP @ 404-874-6782 or write to 828 W. Peachtree Street, N.W. Suite 206A, Atlanta, GEORGIA 30308-1146. Fight AIDS With Bikes! Venus will sponsor one man or women of color. Any interested rider should contact the Venus office for details, (404) 622-8069.

"Turning The Tide: Journal of Anti-Racist Activism, Research & Education" is a unique tabloid, particularly "useful to activists and organizers." Contact: "Turning The Tide," P.A.R.T., P.O. Box 1990, Burbank, CA 91507, tel. 310-288-5003, e-mail mnovicktttt@igc.apc.org. Editor Michael Novick reports the "Turning The Tide," is also "now available on-line through the Prison Activist Resource Center web site and gopher address on PeaceNet."

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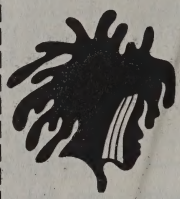

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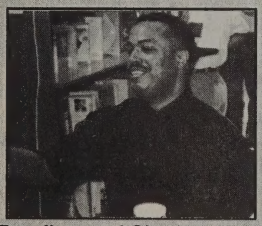

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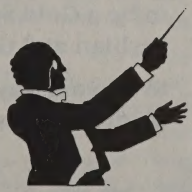

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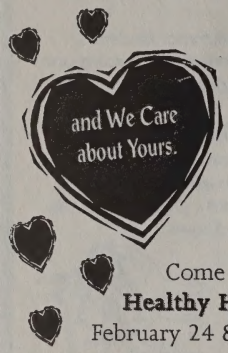

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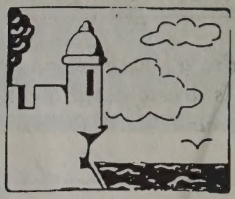

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So, you're a young gay man or lesbian with a story to tell, huh? Well, Youth SpeakUp is a new department especially for you. Send your story (500 words or less) to Venus–YSU, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, GA 30312.

Coming Out Was Tough To Do

By Stephanie D. Ellis

Publicly acknowledging your homosexuality in a society filled with racism, gay bashing, and sexual discrimination is a difficult choice for many men and women across the country.

Stacey Nelson, 23, a junior at Clark Atlanta University, says revealing her sexual preference to her immediate family was one of the most agonizing and controversial decisions she has ever made. Nelson was "in the closet" for ten years; those years filled with secrecy, lies, and shame. "Those years of keeping my sexuality away from my parents forced me to live in two different worlds. One world, the life my family wanted me to live; the husband, the two kids, the dog, and the white picket fence. The other world, my world with my female spiritual soulmate."

Nelson, born and reared in Jackson, Mississippi, recalls one of her greatest fears in announcing her homosexuality was her fear of rejection. "I remember as a teenager, my father ridiculed and condemned all homosexuals to hell." She says after telling her parents of her own sexual tendencies, the family rejected her as a devil worshiper, and banished her from her home of 20 years.

Nelson realizes the consequences of her decision to confront her homosexuality and strongly supports her decision. "I remember as a teenager my father said gays went against everything God intended life to be. His favorite phrase was, 'Those damn gays and faggots are going straight to hell.' Listening to my father's reaction to homosexuality I vowed never to share my sexuality with my family. But as the years passed, I had to open myself to my dearest family."

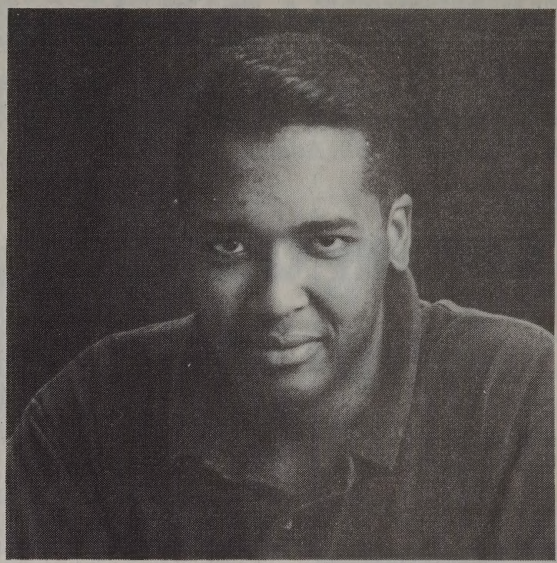
Reflecting on her childhood, Nelson explained that her life was filled with domestic violence and alcoholism. As a child, Nelson recalled many nights witnessing her father physically beat her mom. "My father would leave home a gentle, caring man; and would return home five hours later a violent, angry monster." As a result, she associated men with violence and anger. Alcoholism remained a constant in the Nelson household. As she viewed her father's daily use of alcohol to solve his problems, she too began to use alcohol as a problem solver.

Although Nelson likes women, she admits her feelings are more emotional than sexual. "In everyday situations, women seem to take their time to make you feel comfortable, where as men only care about their own personal feelings."

As a member of the National Association of Gay Rights, and a member of the Lesbian Society located at Spelman College, Nelson's main objective is working toward ending discrimination and negative gay stereotypes. Nelson also receives weekly counseling for her childhood experiences with domestic violence.

Stephanie D. Ellis is a journalism major at Clark Atlanta University

Let's talk PRIVATELY...



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PROFILE OF A QUEEN

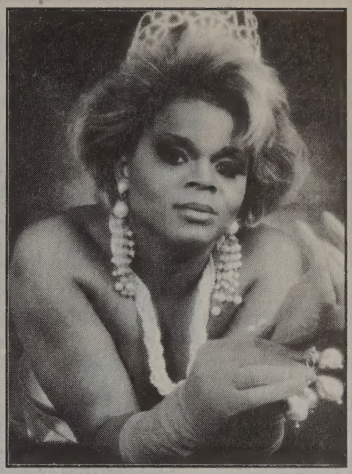
Name:..... Whitney Farris-Lee

Age:..... 35

Status:..... Unattached

Hometown:..... Augusta, GA

Former Titles: .. Too Numerous To Mention!



Whitney joined the Venus staff as a sales executive when the magazine was still a concept. She is chiefly responsible for many of our early, long-term advertisers. Whitney currently resides in Saint Louis, Missouri, where she is working on her autobiography, entitled "I, Diana." We miss you, Girl!

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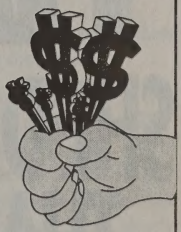

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AIDS RESEARCH

Is Dallas READY?

Ninth Annual Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Conference

By Linus Lynell

When asked about the benefit of the conference being held in Dallas, Texas, Alpha Thomas, Coordinator of Umoja Hermanas replied "I feel the conference is definitely a wake-up call for the black gay, lesbian, bisexual & transgendered community in this city, and time the conference has been held this far south of the Mason-Dixie line." J. Gray feels that economics is the greatest benefit for conference participants. "Dallas is centrally-located as far as travel is concerned. Hotels here want our business and are eager to please our community." Echoing that sentiment, Amazing Grace Foundation founder R.J. Allen feels that Dallas, Texas offers "true southern hospitality."

In light of the ultra-conservative right-wing movement that most citizens in this country are feeling (directly or indirectly), community members will readily admit that they are uncertain how the City of Dallas will react to the conference being held here. Many, however, are optimistic that there won't be any direct opposition. A. Thomas isn't expecting the worst because "most African-American churches won't be aware that the conference is being held here. For those who are aware, they will be so caught up in their own mundane worlds that they won't care, or won't have the courage to be involved in this issue." Thomas adds, "I feel our churches are different from Anglo churches in that our churches are too afraid to make any type of public statement on any issue. Protests, in my opinion, are not likely. If they haven't done it against white gays and lesbians, I doubt if they will be able to muster up enough courage to do it against members of their own community."

PHOTOGRAPH BY RON SINGLETON

(l to r) Ken Reeves, Co-Chairs Gregory May and Valerie Wagner, and Dwayne Breeman at the Los Angeles '95 National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum Summit.

In keeping with the Conference theme "As The Struggle Continues," N. Rawls feels "the first step in the struggle will be for us to accept ourselves for who we are. Once that's done on an individual basis, half the battle is won. We must also learn to accept other individuals in our community for who they are. Only then can we come together as a community, as one voice."

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By James Darren Clay

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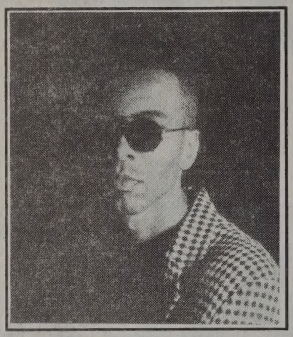

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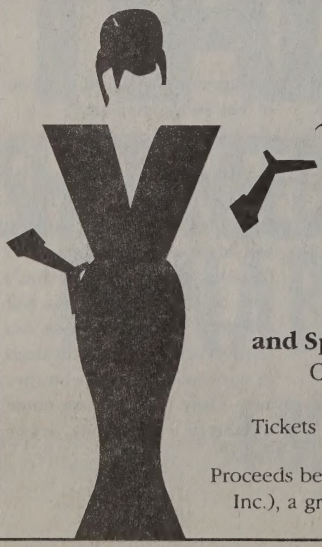

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Making Black *History*

I'm not certain how the rainbow became the symbol of the larger gay and lesbian community but I have been led to believe that it symbolizes the diversity of the lesbian/bi/gay and transgendered community. In the lesbian/bi/gay and trans contingent in the Martin Luther King day celebration, rainbow flags were in abundance. I personally look for the day when the reality that the rainbow symbolized materializes.

African-American gays and lesbians are all too invisible in the gay and lesbian movement. We are often locked out of the leadership of the community due to the lack of dollars and power along with racism in the gay and lesbian community.

Marcia Bailey-McComb at the Bayard Rustin Pre-March Rally.

I've marched in several King day marches over the years and this year was markedly different. Out, proud, African-American gays and lesbians stood in the front of the contingent. When the black dignitaries, civil rights veterans, and unionists walked by they didn't see a throng of white faces they saw their sons and daughters, sisters and brothers; they saw a part of their community that is often invisible and silent. For the first time I saw African-American gays and lesbians stand on the side lines cheering and waving their support to us. Some even spontaneously stepped off the curb to join us.

Before taking part in the march we took the opportunity to remember Bayard Rustin. Bayard Rustin was a vital part of the African-American struggle for freedom and liberation. The lesson that we as black gays and lesbians must draw from that is that he did this in the 50's and 60's as an out black gay man. He did not have to go through the schizophrenia of what comes first being black or being gay.

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KING MARCH 1996

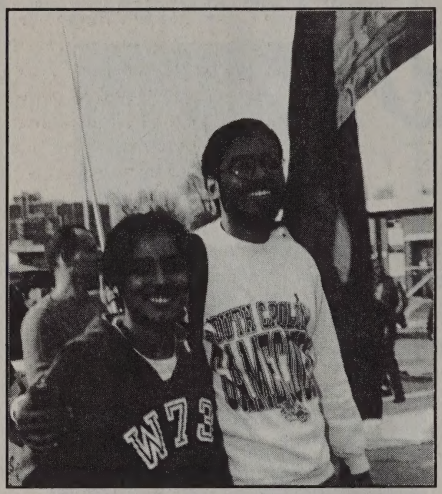
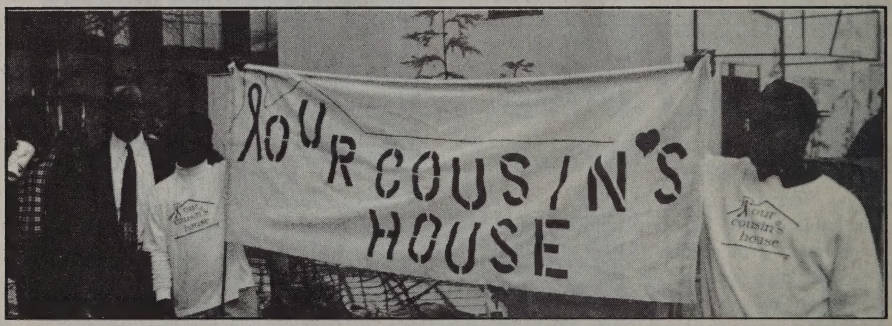
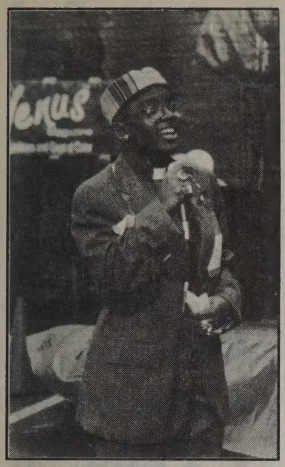


PHOTO: E. BENNETT/SOUTHERN VOICE



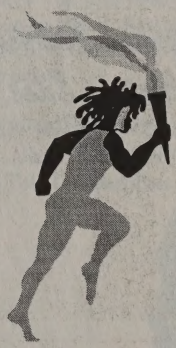


Reverend S.F. Mahee, of Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church greets rally participants.

How far have we come in 1996? Unfortunately, not far. We as African-American gays and lesbians all too often believe that we have to live as divided persons. The gay and lesbian community at-large calls on us to make up the numbers and to provide a black face at times in the struggle. They tell us that we should only be concerned about gay liberation and to forget the issues that we face as African-American lesbians and gays. The African-American community calls on us to deny our love and attractions and to subvert them for the interests of the struggle for black liberation.

Sisters and brothers, we cannot and should not do either. When I think about our freedom I think about is our freedom to be totally and wholly who we are; black lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered person. Key to this is our taking up the instruments of power and organization. Key to this is our participation in the movement for freedom as out African-American gays and lesbians. We need to empower ourselves in the fight against all the forms of oppression that we face, be it racism, homophobia, or sexism. As Audre Lourde stated so succinctly, "Your silence will not protect you.: Our silence is killing us. We are dying of AIDS, we are suffering from all types of stress as we struggle to pass, to be straight acting and appearing." Our children are being taken from us. We allow the religious right (read: religious wrong) to coopt the leaders of our church communities. We silently listen to homophobic death dealing tirades from the pulpit and believe the lies that we are an abomination and are going to hell. When are we going to say, no!? We add black gays and lesbians have gone beyond hiding in the closet. We lie in the tomb of our fears waiting as Lazarus waited for someone to say, "Come out." We lie in the tomb of our self-hatred waiting for a rebirth, a resurrection.

The level of participation of black gays and lesbians in this years march was beautiful. It was a sign of the coming spring for our community. The fact that the Bayard Rustin rally was primarily a manifestation of the black gay and lesbian community here in Atlanta is also commendable. Yet the majority of persons in the contingent were still white gay and lesbian. Their presence and their wish to commemorate the legacy of Dr. King is welcomed. The question is, where were you? African-American gay men particularly were noticed in their scarcity. Sisters, certainly outnumbered the brothers. Why is that? I don't have an answer. The challenge for us is to free ourselves from ourselves, or rather free ourselves from the shackles of our fear. We will not be free unless we chose to be free. We will have no power unless we empower ourselves. We are very powerful, because we are every where. The time has come for us to come together and join as one in the power of unity and of love, in the spirit of Dr. King and of Bayard Rustin.



When I think about our freedom, what I think about is our freedom to be totally and wholly who we are; black lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered person.... We need to empower ourselves in the fight against all the forms of oppression that we face, be it racism, homophobia, or sexism.

ART AUCTION

AIDS Education/Services for Minorities is sponsoring an

Art Auction

and Banquet on Saturday, March 23, 1996 at 6:30 p.m. in the King Plow Art Center, 887 West Marietta St., Atlanta. Guest speaker: Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney. For information or tickets, call Delores Rollins (404) 753-2900. All proceeds benefit AESM.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

African American Historic Bike Tour sponsored by Georgia Ride for a Cure, monthly training ride. A bike tour of

African-American Historic Sites.

Call (404) 874-6782 for more information today.

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Happy Birthday

Madam Chair! Gail Booker, March 3rd.

ENTERTAINMENT

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COFF-E HOUSE

Friday, March 1, 1996 at 8 p.m. and every first Friday of the month. Featuring: E-Cong's Very Own "Bahama Mamas" and opening act Sandra Litell, blues/slide guitarist. $5 admission. Call (404) 378-5570 for information.

EXPO

1996 Women's Business Expo. 15 entrepreneurs speak about

"How to Start Your Own Business!"

Hear owners of a limousine company, theatre/music company, automobile repair, etc. February 24, 1996, 3 p.m.–7 p.m. at **Obvious Choices**, 122 N. Avondale Road, Avondale Estates, GA (404) 294-0704. $3 Admission. Wine and cheese networking immediately following.

MEETINGS

ZAMI, Atlanta's Premier African Lesbian Organization will host a fund-raiser on Tuesday, February 13 at 9p.m. to benefit

Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund

Advance tickets $5.00. Call (404) 524-0304.

Third **Atlanta Lambda Center,** Community Forum:

Celebration of Black History Month

"Unity Through Personal Empowerment" Co-sponsors: Black & White Men Together, Dyfferent Gyrl Production, Hospitality Atlanta, Les Femimes Elegant, Phat Jam Production, Positive Black Lesbians United, Prizm, Second Sunday Discussion Group, Sisters of 30 Something Special, SONG, Spelman College Lesbian, Bi-Sexual Alliance, The ADODI MUSE, Think It's Not When It Iz, Inc., ZAMI. Keynote speakers: Mandy Carter and Dr. Elias Farajaje-Jones. Sunday, February 11, 1996, 3-5 PM, Sisters Chapel, Spelman University. Come and join us! We have hometown

entertainment and more! $5 Donation requested. Includes a chance to win an original painting and door prizes. Reception to follow at Karats, 511 Peachtree Street at the corner of Renaissance & Peachtree St.

The Art of Love

Throughout history artists have captured their most intimate images of love on canvas. Everyone is welcome to join us February 14, 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Level 2 Fine Arts Gallery, 385 Marietta Street for a romantic evening. Call (404) 522-8477.

PARTIES

A Party Network Affair & Edison's Night Club; Holiday Inn—Duluth; 6050 Peachtree Industrial Blvd., Saturday, February 17, 1996, 11:30 pm to 3 am; $5.00. Special performance by OM-Z Dance Company.

CHA-CHA House presents

AMOR

at Club Revolution, Friday, February 16, 11p.m. to 4 a.m. with DJ Carlos Morales. For information, call 770-908-5340

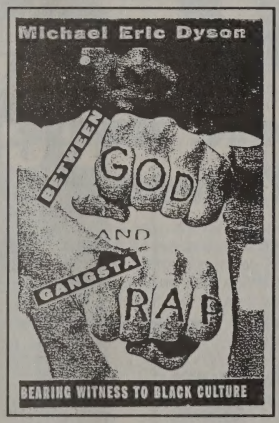
Women in Dallas

Valentine's Day Party

Saturday, Feb. 17, 10PM–3AM at State Fair Ground (1121 1st Ave.) near I-30 & 2nd and African-American Museum.. $10, $8 with 2 can goods. by Shades of Ebony Connection.

READINGS

Georgia State University, Spotlight Programs Board and the Department of Sociology present



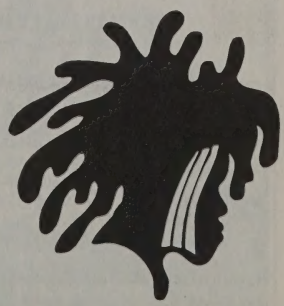
DR. MICHAEL E. DYSON

Professor, Department of Communication Studies, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. February 28, 1996, Wednesday, 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm, urban Life Auditorium (Piedmont Ave & Decatur St.). A Public Lecture: The Reverend Dyson, Ph.D. is the author of three books: Between God and Gangsta Rap: Bearing Witness to Black Culture: Reflecting Black: AFRICAN-AMERICAN Cult Criticism and; The Myth and Meaning of Malcolm X. Free and open to all students & the entire GSU Community. Reception and book signing immediately following the lecture. For more information contact: Spotlight (404) 651-2232; GSU Sociology (404) 651-2285. FAX: (404) 651-1712.

Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse presents the following events are upcoming in February at Outwrite:

Sunday, February 11, 7:30 pm— **Sparky's Valentine Poetry Hour** Featuring Adodi Muse, a gay AFRICAN-AMERICAN writing collective.

Sunday, March 3, 7:30 pm— E. Lynn Harris reading and signing **And This Too Shall Pass..**



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Feb. 14–Feb. 17, 14th Street Playhouse

The critics wrote of Jomandi's "Do Lord," it's "like sitting down with your grandparents...," it is "an exploration of collective memory because some things should never be forgotten." The play by JAMES DE JONGH, set in the Virginia Home for the Colored in 1936, weaves together the reminiscences of former slaves and places these voices of faith and courage against a backdrop of spirituals and visual images of modern day African-American achievers. Director Andrea Frye and members of the original cast recreate this stunning and unforgettable celebration of the generations.

...in the stellar tradition of artists RUBY DEE and OSSIE DAVIS GUY DAVES stars as the legendary blues singer Robert Johnson in

TRICK THE DEVIL

Feb. 23–March 10, 14th Street Playhouse

A woman loved a man; he done her wrong; she takes up with a stranger in town who plays upon her loneliness like the blues. The stranger, Robert Johnson, is heralded as the best blues musician who ever lived. Unknown at 24 and dead at 26, Johnson developed his blues "powers" so quickly that many believed the tale he told; he'd "tricked the devil" and risked his soul to learn to play his woman stealing blues. Writer BILL HARRIS, threads the music and legend of Robert Johnson into this mystical story set in a roadside cafe.

Call (404) 876-6346 or Ticketmaster (404) 817-8700

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Mary Griffin: show times 10 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. • $7 cover

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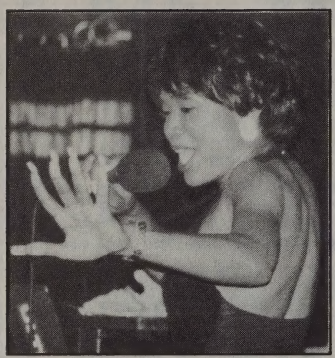

New Orleans entertainer, Mary Griffin, steams the house with her sultry looks and ballads at Karats.

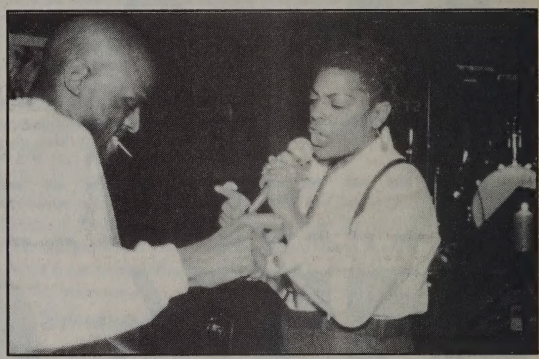

PHOTO: JENA P. JONES

Patrick jams with Adrienne Fishe and EMOJA at the Venus First Anniversary Bash held at Karats last month.

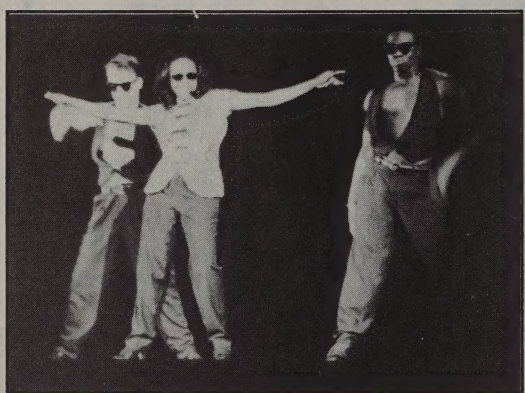

PHOTO: JENA P. JONES

Peep Show '96 raised funds for Children with AIDS/HIV at the Georgia Tech Performing Arts Center.

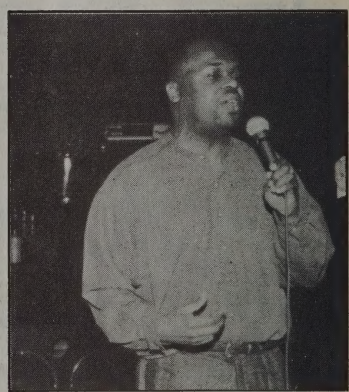

PHOTO: JENA P. JONES

Badili Jones speaks at Venus Anniversary Bash.

ORGANIZATIONS

Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

ADODI New York—A self-supporting organization of gay and bisexual men of African Heritage. 432 West 43rd St, Ste. 8045, N.Y., N.Y. 10036

African Ancestral Lesbian United for Societal Changed (Formerly Salsa Soul)—(212) 620-7310. Candice.

African American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA)—(404) 908-7371.

AIDS Education Services for Minorities (AESM)—P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, GA 30337. (404) 753-2900 or (404) 743-7733.

AIDS Response Knoxville—Suite 411, 109 Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919, (615) 450-2437.

AIDS Services in Asian Communities, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 212, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1938

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church—575 Boulevard. Sunday, 7 PM, evenings, 8:30 PM, (404) 622-1154.

Atlanta Lambda Center, Inc.—P.O. Box 15180, Atlanta, GA 30333. (404) 662-9010.

A. Lorde Collective—African-American Lesbians Organized to Renew Dignity and Empowerment. Hotline: (313) 862-3396.

AYA Institute—dedicated to the education and mental health of our community. P.O. Box 3824, Jersey City, N.J. 07303-3824 or (201) 451-3412.

Bisexual Womyn of Colour—BIWOC since 1991. P.O. Box 020136, Brooklyn, NY 11202-136. (212) 479-7886. Donna Reddy, pres.

Black & White Men Together—POB 1334, Atl., GA 30301-1334. (404) 892-BWMT.

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum—1219 S. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 964-7820. FAX (213) 964-7830.

Black Gay Pride Atlanta—P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, GA 30312. (404) 872-1097.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. (BLGP Inc.)—Box 7184, Washington, DC. 20024.

Black Women's Network—Box 5, 136 Kingsland Height St., London, England, UK/E8/2NS

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)—Meets every Friday at 8 PM at the Amassi Center. 3419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA. For more info, call Ms. Clydis (510) 649-0536.

BLUeS—Bronx Lesbians United in Sisterhood, Event Organization. (212) 330-9196

Boyz of Distinction—P.O. Box 78091, Atl., GA 30532.

Brothers Back-2-Back, Inc.—An African American HIV/AIDS Organization, P.O. Box 11366, Atlanta, GA 30310. Voice: (404) 593-5805.

Chicago Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays—(312) 871-2117.

Cinnamon Productions—Womyn of Color event organizers. (718) 994-0028.

Creation Woman—poets/artists & affiliates meet last Sun. each month. (310) 422-1970.

D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men and Bisexuals—(202) 388-8078.

Dyfferent Gyrl Production—P.O. Box 13346, Atlanta, GA 30324. (404) 908-5340.

Friend of Friends—(301) 735-5023; P.O. Box 77075, Washington, D.C. 20013

GALAEI (for Latino gay men), 1233 Locust St., 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 985-3382

Gay and Out Productions—P.O. Box 111, Clarkston, GA 30021-0111. (404) 299-7809

Gay Black Female (GBF)—6312 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 114, Hollywood, CA 90028. (310) 288-6315.

The Gay and Lesbian Center—208 W. 13th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011.

Gay/Lesbian Latino/a Community Organization Out Reach, Inc.—(404) 346-3922 or (800) 441-2437.

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teacher's Network—P.O. Box 5512, Atlanta, Georgia 31107. (404) 872-4320.

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)—2103 N. Decatur Rd., Suite 190, Decatur, GA 30033. PH: (404) 377-4258. EM: info@gabc.gaypride.com

Home Free Ministry—P.O. Box 688, Atl., GA 30301. (404) 818-2033.

Hospitality Atlanta—For Women of Color (404) 523-0228.

International Black Writers & Artists—meet 2nd Sunday Bladwin Hills/Crenshaw (213) 964-3721.

Las Buenas Amigas—(212) 868-7816. Carmen, The Gay & Lesbian Center, 208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011.

Latinos En Accion—Youth support group. P.O. Box 15388, Atlanta, GA 30325. (404) 621-5743. Yolanda Leeky, (404) 753-2840.

Lesbians Latinos en Nuestro Ambiente—(707) 292-7705.

LLEGO, National Latino/a Lesbian & Gay Organization—P.O. Box 44483, Wash., DC. 20026.

Malebox—Meeting black men. P.O. Box 75392, Wash., D.C. 20013.

Minority AIDS Project of Philly and Vicinity, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 218, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1937

MOCAA (Men of Color Against AIDS)—Boston, MA. (617) 442-3800

National Assoc. of Black & White Men Together—1747 Connecticut Ave., Washington, DC. 20020. (202) 462-3599.

National Black Women's Health Project—1237 Gordon, Street S.W., Atlanta, GA (404) 758-9590.

North Carolina Mobilization '96—P.O. Box 28718, Raleigh, NC 28718. (918) 828-3311

our cousin's house—An African American AIDS Organization. P.O. Box 10709, Atlanta, GA 30310. (404) 758-0397.

ONYX/Chicago—Leather Social Club for Men of Color and their friends. 1340 W. Irving Park Road, Suite 188, Chicago IL 60613.

Positive Black Lesbians United (PBLU)—P.O. Box 655, Avondale Estates, GA 30002. (404) 250-7950.

Pink Triangle Productions—Gay Female Entertainment Party Source. (770) 723-7292.

Project Open Hand, Atlanta—(404) 525-4620. Home delivered meals for people with AIDS related illness.

Project AZUKA, Inc.—An AIDS organization for women. P.O. Box 9173, Savannah, GA 31402. (912) 233-6733.

Pyramid Productions—Cultural Shows & Dances. (718) 622-5093.

Q-GLU—Queens Gays & Lesbians United. (718) 639-4951.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church—Box 50047, Atl., GA 30302. (404) 388-4624.

SAGE—Senior Action in a Gay Environment. (212) 741-2247.

SALGA—South Asian Lesbian Gay Association; P.O. Box 50, Cooper Station, NY, NY 10276-0050; (212) 294-2550; Email: salganyc@dorsai.org

Second Sunday Discussion Group—POB 1574, Decatur, GA 30031. (404) 629-0583.

Shades of Brown—Professional Womyn/Men of Color. (212) 439-1024.

Shades of Ebony Connections—For Women of Color, Dallas, (214) 570-5795.

Sisters of 30 Something Special—(404) 350-9758.

Sister Love, Inc.—(404) 753-7733, (404) 753-1500.

Sophisticated Ladies—Lesbian Group for Mature Women of Color. (202) 788-1866.

Southern Conference of Black Gay Men—P.O. Box 212421, Columbia S.C. 29221

Spelman College Lesbian Bi-Sexual Alliance—710 Peachtree St., Suite 126, Atlanta, GA 30308. (404) 908-5368.

The ADODI MUSE—a black gay male literary group; 348 Berean Ave. S.E., Atlanta, Ga 30312. (404) 521-2515.

The COLOURS Organization, Inc.—201 S. 12th., Ste. 1R, Phila. PA 19107. Education, prevention and support programs for sexual minority people of color. For more information, please contact (215) 627-6233.

The Men's Gathering—P.O. Box 190869, Dallas, Texas 75219-0869,(214) 521-5342, ext. 876. Meeting times: 4th Friday of each month, 7 pm

Tres—Dance Parties for Womyn of Color. (718) 670-3643

TRIKONE—An Asian gay and lesbian organization. trikatl@mindspring.com

ULOAH (United Lesbians of African Heritage)—1626 N. Wilcox Ave., #190, L.A., CA 90028. (213) 960-5051.

Unity, Inc. (for African American gay men), 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 214, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1876

Viva!—Lesbian and Gay Latino Arts Organization. (310) 301-8035.

Women in the Life—D.C.'s Black Lesbian party hotline. (202) 667-8078.

Women of Color Breast Cancer Survivors Support Project—8610 S. Sepulveda Blvd, Ste 200, L.A., CA 90045 (310) 216-3200.

WRFG Radio,Gay Graffiti with Deborah Paget—Thursdays, 7–8 PM.**Crossroads with Baldelie Jones**—3rd Thursday, 7–8 PM.**Sister Love, Sister's Time**—6 PM Thursdays"**Alternative Talk**"—2nd/4th Fridays, 6PM.

Yahimba, Lesbians of African Descent—1012 1/2 Dodge, Evanston, IL 60202 or (708) 328-7715

YouthPride—(404) 815-9965,Teen Support Group (13-18: Wed. evenings 6:30-8:00; Young Adult Personal Growth Group (18-24 yo): Wed. evenings 8:30-10:00.

ZAMI—Atlanta's premiere African American lesbian organization meets 2nd and 4th Sundays from 6:30 until 8:30 PM. Call (404) 370-1392.

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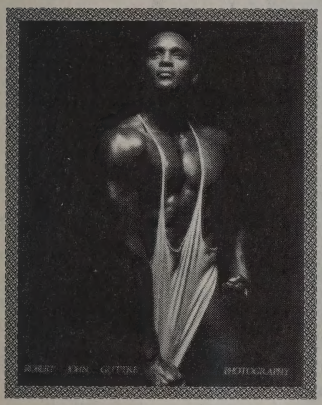

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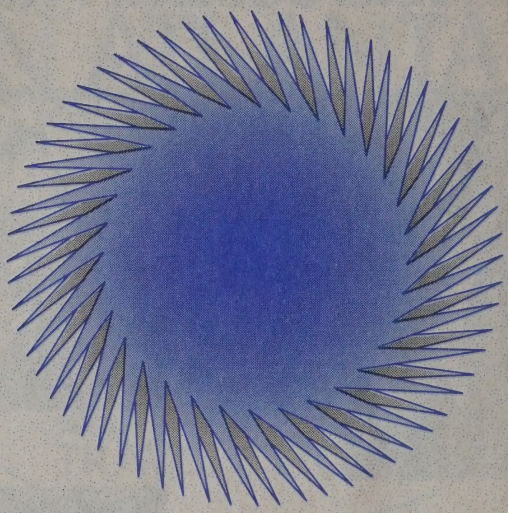
bgpa

black gay pride atlanta



There's a void in our universe… We need a logo.

Can you fill this space and become a part of Black Gay & Lesbian History?

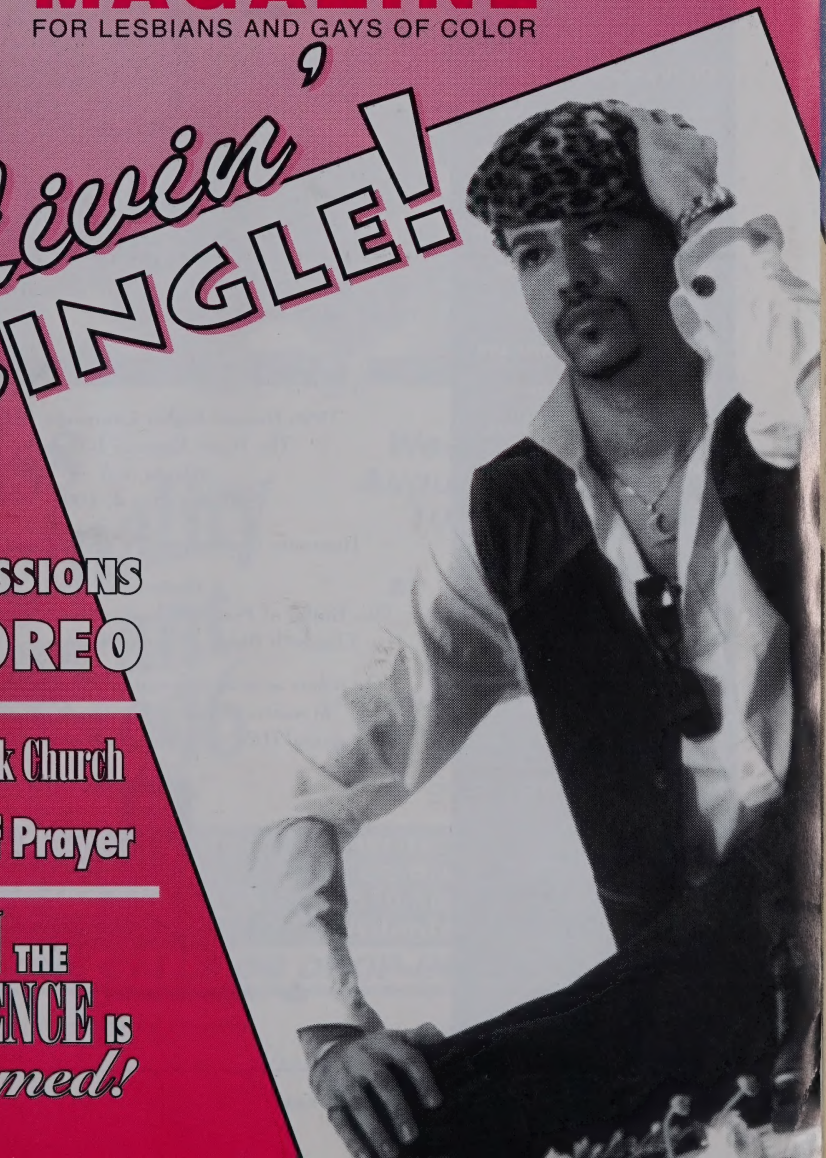
All submissions should be creative and reflective of the ideas embodied by Black Pride. All submissions must be postmarked by March 15th for consideration. Send all submissions to Black Gay Pride Atlanta, Logo Submissions, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, GA 30312. Call 404/872-6410 for more information.

Venus™

April 1996

MAGAZINE

FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR



Livin' SINGLE!

CONFESSIONS of an OREO

The Black Church Week of Prayer

WHEN THE SILENCE IS exhumed!

96

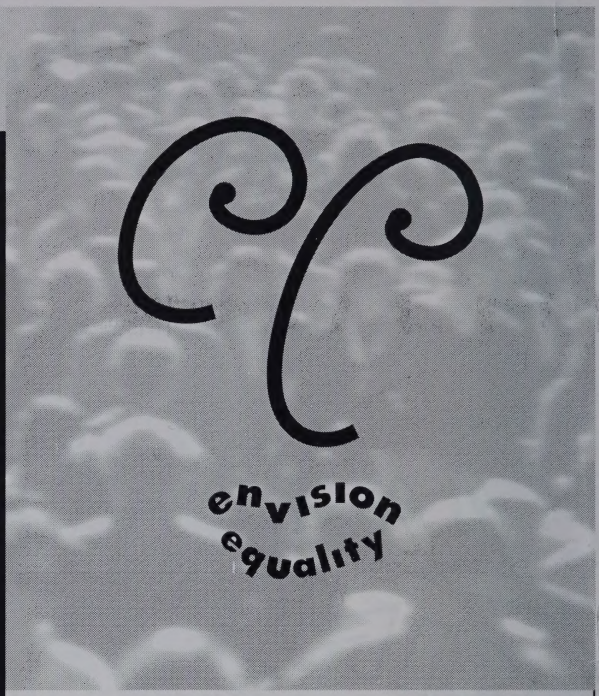
We all envision an America where lesbian and gay people are ensured of their basic equal rights.

On May 4 you can help make the vision a reality. Join us at the 1996 Atlanta Human Rights Campaign Dinner at the fabulous new Hyatt Regency Ballroom.

Enjoy cocktails, dinner and dancing while you meet friends and special guests. Bid on items at our pool-side silent auction. And stay overnight at the Hyatt once the festivities are through and take advantage of specially-discounted room rates.

Too good to be true!

Why wait for someone else to define equality? There's no time like an election year to make sure your voice is heard.



1996 Human Rights Campaign Dinner
The Hyatt Regency Ballroom
Atlanta, GA
Saturday May 4, 1996

Honorary Chairperson - Coretta Scott King

Featuring:
Dan Butler of *Frasier*, Chastity Bono, Sean Sasser
Elizabeth Birch – Executive Director, HRC

For tickets or more information call 770 840-6969
To reserve a room at the Hyatt Regency
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A fundraiser for Atlanta Pride '96. Tips, Door & Raffle donated for Pride 1996.

and

Miss Originality Pageant 1996

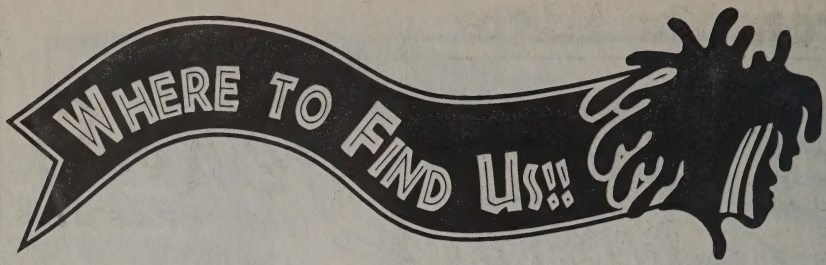
Wednesday
August 7, 1996
10:00 p.m.
at the Armory

A fundraiser for the AIDS Survival Project. Tips, Door & Raffle donated to AIDS Survival Project.

For entry forms & further information fax your request to: 404-303-7255

or write: Pageant Info c/o Brushstrokes 1510 Piedmont Ave. Atlanta, GA 30324

NO PHONE CALLS OR DROP-INS PLEASE!



Intown Atlanta

Truth Bookstore
AID Atlanta
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Charis Books & More
Sevananda
AIDS Education Services
for Minorities
Sister Love, Inc.
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A Different Basket
Obvious Choices
Unity Fellowship
Crystal Touch at Underground

Decatur

DeKalb College
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Chapter 11 Books

Macon

Tubman Gallery
Topaz Club

Savannah

Project Azuka, Inc.
Our Family Circle

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Clark Atlanta University
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Emory University
Howard University
Georgia Southern Univ.

Baltimore

Simplicity Attractions
Lammas
Lambda Rising

Boston

MOCAA

Brooklyn

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KoKo Bar

Cambridge

New Words Books

Chicago

People Like Us Books

Detroit

Chosen Books
Zippers
Affirmations

Jackson, MS

Club City Lights
Sugar Bakers

Los Angeles

BGLLF Office
AIDS Project L.A.
WATTS AIDS Office
Cafe Woodfox
Sisterhood Bookstore

New Hampton

Pride & Joy Books

New Orleans

Charlene's
Wolfensdales
Club Attractions

New York City

The Gay & Lesbian Center
Simplicity Attractions
A Different Light Bllkstore
G.M.A.D.
GMHC

Norfolk

Outright Books
Self-Improvement Edu. Center

Philadelphia

Giavonni's Room
Just For You! Events
Black Roses Events

St. Louis

Lest Banks Books

San Francisco

A Different Light Bookstore

Toronto

A Different Booklist

Washington, D.C.

Tracks
Yaya Books
SisterSpace
Black Gay Pride, Inc.
Sophisticated Ladies Events
Simplicity Attractions
Lammas
Lambda Rising Bookstore

From The Editor

I had a conversation with a brother in L.A. who is working on a proposal to travel across the country documenting African-American gay and lesbian communities, and pride events, etc. Sounds exciting to me because, of course, I just knew that Atlanta was at the top of his list... WRONG! He was planning to bypass Atlanta and simply write us off as nothing but a "party town" sighting very little political consciousness among the masses of black gays in the South.

I couldn't hear any more! I had to stop brother in the middle of his pontification and just READ him! First of all, nowhere in the world are black gays and lesbians more conscious of the politics surrounding the issues of AIDS, housing discrimination, access to health care, black church homophobia and racism. Oh, trust me, we are conscious of these politics. Now, I will admit that it has been along time coming to somehow change our community's pinned up anger and frustration into a proactive movement, but the wheels are finally beginning to turn.

New black gay leadership has emerged in Atlanta. Young people who are compassionate about their work and not as concerned about the safety of white gays when speaking about the issues at hand.

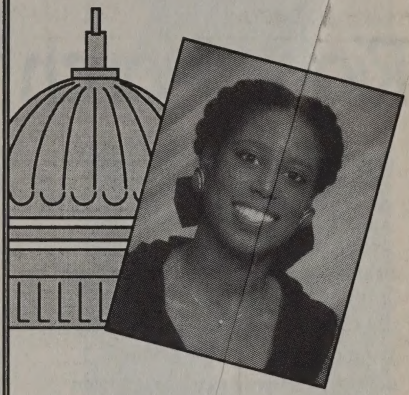
It's a new day. Organizations like Second Sunday, a discussion group for black gay men recently held a well-attended political forum. There is new interest in re-establishing CAD, the Coalition of African Descent, a political umbrella for our community. In The Life, Inc., Atlanta's black gay and lesbian pride organization has done phenomenal work to ensure that Atlanta's black gay pride celebration is much more than just a "party." Several of Atlanta's black gay and lesbian leaders have come together to organize a fundraiser to help ensure the re-election of Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney because we recognize the need for direct access to policy makers.

By bypassing Atlanta, I think his documentary will be missing a great piece of black gay history, but that's O.K. because here in the South, we document ourselves.

JOIN

Venus™

& FRIENDS



SUNDAY, APRIL 14
THE VENUS OFFICE
616 Ormewood Ave • 622-8069
5 PM – 8 PM

Bar•B•Q Fundraiser
MEET
CongressWoman
Cynthia McKinney

Your $25 contribution will help send Cynthia back to Washington! To confirm your support and attendance, make your check payable to "Cynthia McKinney for Congress," or to remain anonymous make your check payable to Venus Magazine and we will forward your contribution. You may mail it to P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, GA 30312 or bring your donation on Sunday, April 14, 1996.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN

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SAN FRANCISCO, CA

SATURDAY, APRIL 14, 1996

Bringing together women, men and children from across the country to send a clear message to policy makers: ***We actively support affirmative action; economic justice; abortion rights and reproductive freedom; civil rights for people of color; lesbian, gay and bisexual rights and efforts to end violence against women.***

Any group having 20 or more participants may be classified as an official delegation. All delegations must register by March 15, 1996 to receive special recognition.

For more information, contact:
FIGHT THE RIGHT MARCH
NATIONAL NOW ACTION CENTER
1000 16th Street, N.W. • Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-331-0066 or 202-785-8576 (fax)

NOW

Venus™ MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

April 1996
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Venus™ MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

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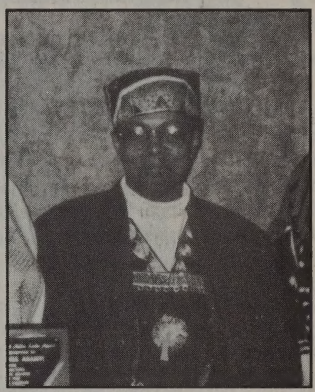
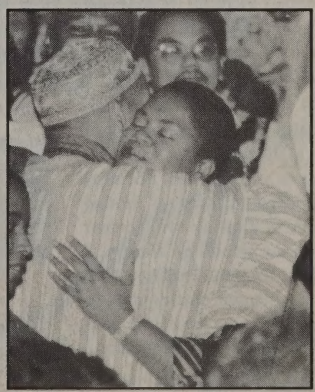
New York's Hottest Latin Ballroom!



Boston Breakfast Honors Bayard Rustin



Black Churches Unite for the Healing of AIDS.

WHEN the silence is EXHUMED

South Florida Mileposts & a Brief Background of People of Afrikan Descent In-the-Life

By Rice Blaque

"The density of the silence surrounding our lives does not make it easy to gain this information."

—*Essex Hemphill*

"In-the-life" is a terminology historically used by those people of Afrikan descent who lead lives (not lifestyles) which other populations label gay, lesbian, bi, transgendered. Gathering historical information from and about South Floridans of Afrikan Descent In-The-Life is a challenge echoed throughout the Afrikan Diaspora

Buried by religious teachings and beliefs, ignored by cultural traditions, distorted by myths, suppressed by fears' realities and the general taboo that "black folks don't air their dirty linen," the silence is deafening.

As a rule, people of Afrikan Descent In-The-Life have not been highly visible in Gay Pride marches and parades, not very vocal in political forums (noting however a growing involvement in feminist politics by Women of Afrikan Descent In-The-Life), and not regular participants in the social landscape of the general lesbian and gay community.

This "invisible life" is not borne of apathy, separatism, or a lack of awareness. The mental, spiritual, emotional and physical survival of People of Afrikan Descent In-The Life has meant developing a suit of armor to combat the Black community's hetrosexism and the gay and lesbian community's racism.

Thus developed an "underground" network of professionals, athletes, teens, seniors, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, daughters, sons, grandparents or someone you know or think you know, who share their secret in a code of silence.

Silent to those outside of their circle which may never interact with other People of Afrikan Descent also In-The-Life. They are "passing" much as light-skinned people of color have "passed" for white before.

The overwhelming feeling of Afrikan Americans In-the-Life is that after surviving drugs, guns, AIDS, racism, criminal injustice they are abused as causalities of a system that neither understands nor cares. Rather than confront this situation, many avoid being consumed and/or paralyzed by it by going underground, yet remaining closeted destroys self-esteem and augments self-hatred.

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

"Due to these intolerant attitudes some members of the black gay community have chosen to flee to the relative safety of the white gay community... even those brave enough to come out to families in turn are treated as if they have some dark, dirty secret to hide and are told not to embarrass the family." Nathan Kerr (Vol 1, No 4 "Knowledge is Life")

"Black American's view of the gay community is also white-washed. Thereby marginalizing an essential component of its own community. Rendering its sons (daughters), fathers and uncles as outcasts..." - Kerr

The silence will be exhumed, the celebration is near!

The essay "When the Silence Is Exhumed" was included in the Broward County Library's second annual recognition of Gay and Lesbian Pride Month

August 30 — 1996 — September 2

IN THE LIFE

ATLANTA

general meetings
every 3rd Sunday
5—7 pm.

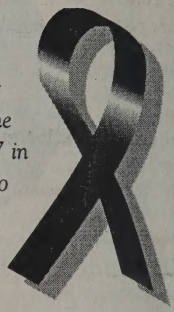
828 West Peachtree St.
2nd floor

FOR MORE INFORMATION

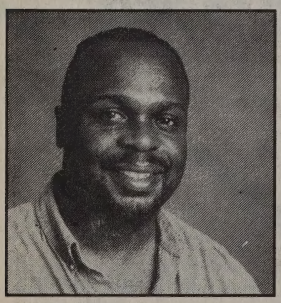
In The Life Atlanta
Pride Line
404.872.6410

ACTION in JACKSON

The National Task Force for AIDS Prevention (NTFAP) together with an advisory board of black gay community leaders from eighth southern states will be holding a technical assistance and training conference devoted to alerting and sensitizing AIDS service providers to the needs of black gay, bisexual men. The conference will be held April 25-27 in Jackson, MS and is called the UJIMA institute. A day will also be devoted to training and empowerment for black gay and bisexual men. The conference is called the UJIMA Institute taken from the Swahili word for "collective work and responsibility."



The conference is an effort to address the prevention needs of African American gay and bisexual men. Recent reports have shown that infection rates for gay men of color in the southeast are the highest in the nation. This is indicative of the failure to reach this population with the resources and messages geared to ward effective prevention.



Author Badili Jones is outreach coordinator for black gay men at AID Atlanta.

- Address the service gaps between service providers and the black gay population in the South.
- Sensitize health providers to the needs and concerns of black gay men.
- Present culturally appropriate HIV prevention strategies for homosexually active men of African descent.
- Link health care providers to black gay men in their communities.
- Empower black gay men to learn to advocate for themselves, to network with other gay men from the southeast, and to foster productive discussions around developing positive self-concepts regarding issues of race and sexuality.

Black gay, bisexual, and transgendered men, and services providers and representatives from AIDS service organizations, community groups are encouraged to attend. Also anyone providing or intending to provide outreach and HIV prevention services to black gay men should attend.

For more information please contact the NTFAP's Raymond E. Dumas, Sr. at 415-356-8131 or call Badili Jones at 404-885-6800 x271.

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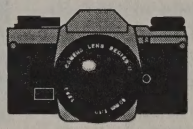

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A Black Church Week Of Prayer

Craig Washington

The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS blessed Atlanta with seven days of prayer, education and fellowship. From Sunday through Saturday March 3–9, seven churches/chapels hosted HIV-focused programs providing spiritual sustenance and practical information. Pastors, congregants, service providers, and friends infected and affected convened all over the city to spread healing balm throughout the black community.

This event is actually based upon the original Harlem Week of Prayer established in 1987 by Ms. Pernessa Seal, founder of Balm in Gilead (a technical support agency for churches providing HIV/AIDS services). The CDC (Center for Diseases Control) funded training for the Week's planning committee to implement the programs. This Week was designed to equip the faith community with the means to address the needs of its people.

Healing commenced on Sunday, of course, with the Opening Worship Service at One Accord Community Church of God in Christ (C.O.G.I.C.) in Decatur. With Dr. T.A. Body presiding, the church rocked with a serious praise and worship ministry. Pastor Body's sermon indicted the black Church for failing to welcome all members of the communal family. He mixed humor with passion to illustrate the hypocrisy of church-going Christians and blessed the Week of Prayer as God's commission to the Church. Monday's program held at the Interdenominational Theological Center Chapel in the West End, featured a progressive seminar-fashioned service to educate the pastors. "Homosexuality, AIDS and the Church" and "Can the Church Save Our Children" were among the topics covered.

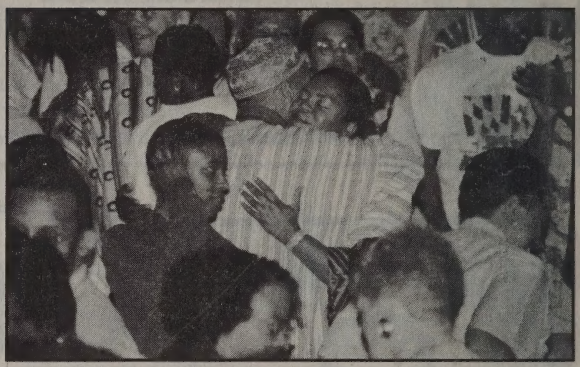

PHOTO: BY RON SINGLETON

Panelists from local AIDS ministries discussed the joys and challenges of such service. Volunteerism was the theme for Tuesday's service held at the "gay-friendly" Hillside Chapel and Truth Center in the Cascade area. Highlights included a processional by Clark Atlanta University students, speaker Dorothy Triplett, formerly of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

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PHOTOGRAPHY: SUZETTE CONTRERAS

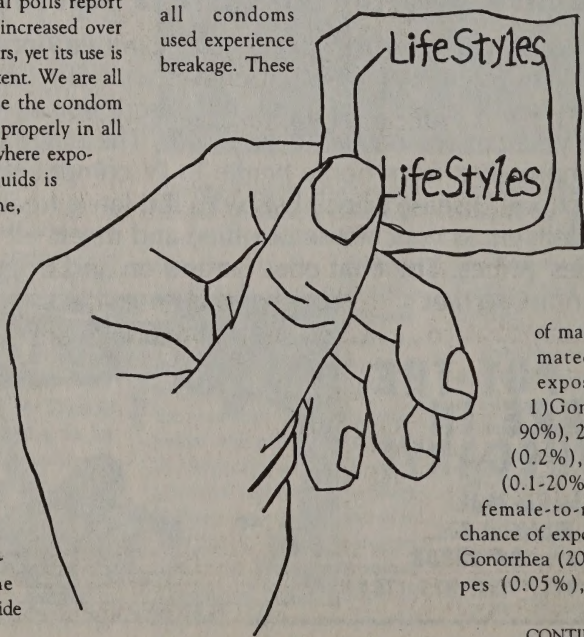
Latex LOVE!

WHAT THE CONDOM CAN AND CAN NOT DO FOR YOU

Leonard Jack, Jr., Ph.D.

Safer sex with the use of a condom without a true understanding of what motivates the act of sex itself is an on-going issue. Specifically, causal sex with the use of the condom is common. Studies are also showing that serial monogamy has increased as well. Overall, national polls report condom use has increased over the past three years, yet its use is not always consistent. We are all challenged to use the condom consistently and properly in all sexual practices where exposure to bodily fluids is possible. No one, regardless of how educated, experienced or healthy you or a potential partner may be, can know enough about safer sex. Condoms are not enough anymore to make anyone feel risk-free. What the condom can provide you is a reduced risk of exposure to sperm and microbes that spread sexually transmitted diseases. If condoms are used consistently and properly your risk is reduced significantly.

It is important to note that national random studies reveal that 2-to-5% of all condoms used experience breakage. These percentages increase with multiple partners and participation in anal sex. Most national data are only limited to heterosexual reporting. According to K.M. Stone in an article entitled, "HIV, STDs and Other Barriers", if condoms are not used consistently and correctly the estimated chance that microbes will be transmitted from one infected partner to another during a single act of intercourse can vary. Examples of male-to-female estimated chance of exposure include: 1)Gonorrhea (50-90%), 2) Genital Herpes (0.2%), and 3) AIDS (0.1-20%). Examples of female-to-male estimated chance of exposure include: 1) Gonorrhea (20%), Genital herpes (0.05%), and 3) AIDS



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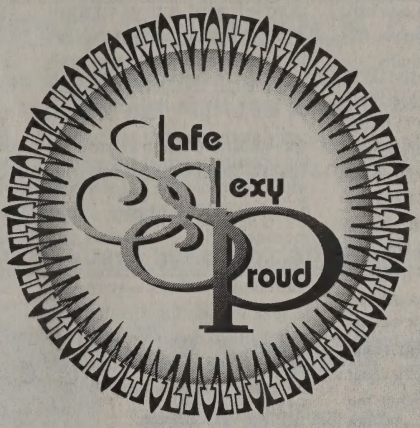
This Is How We Do It... safely



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Latex Love

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

(0.01-to-10%). Despite figures not being available for male-to-male or female-to-female, it is very important to note that HIV transmission is on the increase again in the gay community. We all should be thankful that the condom serves as a barrier against HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Despite its ability to help prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, no one can use the condom as an excuse for making sex safer emotionally.

There is nothing worse than having what may appear to be an intimate experience with someone, only to learn that it served as another attempt to field an empty void in your life. More often than not, this is an on-going scenario in the lives of many people. Perhaps you have shared conversations with friends who comment on a desire for true intimacy that goes beyond sex. What makes it difficult for individuals to go beyond the physical experience and step into true intimacy? There are multiple postulates that can help explain this on-going phenomenon. Serial episodes of temporary romantic "highs" have replaced a desire to experience true intimacy for many regardless of sexuality. It appears that maintaining a relationship is simply too much work, provoking a pessimistic outlook on longevity. In our community, we have defined our relationships to be successful if they last for six months, nine months and a tremendous success should they survive past one year.

Should you take a poll among your closest friends, you will not learn anything new. Most are single; and desiring some form of intimacy—physical, emotional, intellectual and or spiritual.

Now, you or your friends may have decided that until Mr. or Ms. Right comes along, occasional physical intimacy is expected. Let's be real and acknowledge that the desire to have sex will not diminish. This is particularly evident given recent increased rates of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. However, what is more apparent is that we do not hold each other accountable for making a conscious effort to figure out where we are in life. That is, what really motivates us to accept having occasional sexual encounters, with or without the use of a condom. It appears that momentarily, we dismiss the presence of HIV. This has afforded individuals opportunity to give reasons for this inability to practice power over their lives consistently. These reasons can be linked to one familiar word—FEAR.

It is fear of dealing with who we really are that promotes continuous self-defeating habits that have become so very difficult for many to break. Fear of reconciling our past with mother, father, ex-lovers, current life-experiences makes it easy to dismiss the magnitude of our emptiness. Silent about our fears give them greater power over our lives. Additionally, the inability to do something consistently about our acknowledged fears can be equally debilitating. Consequently, we take on opportunities to project "togetherness", seek others that do the same, and use whatever form of escape necessary to anesthetize our inner most pain. We must become aware of what is presented to us, even from members within our own community that foster an inability to be real with ourselves.

We are consistently presented with images of what being gay should be like—young, hung, hot, muscular, etc—and thus we are presented with superficial images that exploit for profit our sex drives, our low self-esteem, and inability to become unstuck. At some point, many of us will pay the price for avoiding taking the time to take care of ourselves. The price is getting greater for a number of reasons. Many of us are finding that it is important to make self-discovery a life-long project given negative receptivity we may have received from family and friends regarding our sexuality. It is increasingly important that we do not allow our sexuality, that which we want others to accept as be "okay" to became the vehicle through which we seek to temporarily fill that empty feeling. Too many of us have been in denial far too long, whether about practicing unsafe sex or how we participate in safer sex to fill a void in our lives.

In fact, no one can continue to think that having sporadic episodes of sex with a condom is risk free; either physical, emotionally or spiritually. Now is the time to examine your motivations for intimacy. Michelangelo Sinorile, a contributing writer for OUT Magazine wrote, "Intimacy does not mean taking crystal meth and heading to a sex club [or one night stand] to become someone's repository as a way to fill that empty feeling you may have inside. It means treating intimacy like anything you value, using it responsibly and wisely."

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The House of Infiniti!

Torrence Allen

For the past two years the House of Infiniti has been creating havoc on the runway of the New York City ballroom scene.

This fierce group of young Latinos has been dominating such categories as butch face, team runway, butch queen in drag runway, bazaar and runway models effect.

One of the rising stars on the scene is your coverman Rudy Infiniti. Rudy, an aspiring model, moved to New York in 1990 to pursue his career. While waiting for his big break and working odd jobs, Rudy would compete at vogueing balls to hone his skills. He joined the House of Infiniti in 1991. Today he is still one of the house's top members with a number of first place trophies to prove it.

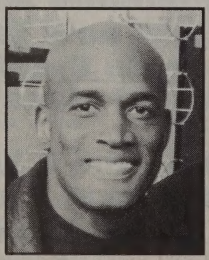
Last fall Rudy and eight of his brothers and sisters participated in the House of Latex Peer Mobilization Intervention: a project aimed at educating young people who participate in the ballroom scene about HIV/AIDS. As a peer educator, Rudy is a model for young people in his community around safer sex and HIV information.

The Latin Ballroom scene, although originated in New York City, has already become a hit among Atlanta's young urban culture.

For more information, contact the House of Latex Project in New York City; c/o GMHC, 129 West 20th Street, NY, NY 10011 or call 212-807-7517.

The Amen Corner

In a powerful production brimming with music, laughter, and spiritual fervor, Artistic Director Kenny Leon will direct Carol Mitchell-Leon, Crystal Fox, and Taurean Blaque in James Baldwin's The Amen Corner, April 3–May 5. One of the country's foremost literary talents and author of "Go Tell it on the Mountain" and "Giovanni's Room," Baldwin wrote The Amen Corner in 1953. Echoing with the sounds of spirituals and jazz, The Amen Corner will feature singers Chandra Currelley, Shelia Ranae Stroud and Bernardine Mitchell.

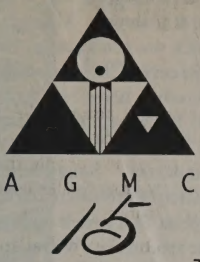


The Alliance Theatre Company's Kenny Leon

The Amen Corner tells the story of Sister Margaret, a pious storefront preacher of 1950's Harlem, and her son David, the church pianist who is being increasingly drawn to the temptations of "downtown" music. Faced with the fear of losing her son and her church, she confronts the illusions of her piety and the many lies of her life, and in a moment of epiphany, Sister Margaret discovers that the true work of the Lord is in loving all of His children.

Baldwin said he drew on his own experience to "recreate the moments I remember as a boy preacher, to involve the people, to shake them up, and, hopefully, to change them."

For Leon, Baldwin's play is the dramatic tale of people struggling to balance their spiritual needs with their desire to live happily fulfilled, rather than to simply survive. "With a musical tension that parallels the dramatic moments," says Leon, "the Alliance Theatre will be filled with a spirit and magic that will leave audiences feeling uplifted and excited about being alive."



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by James Adler

Saturday & Sunday, April 13th & 14th, 8 pm

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In addition to AGMC's over one hundred voices, a full orchestra and guest soloists will perform in Glenn Memorial Auditorium on the Campus of Emory University.

A portion of the proceeds will benefit Project Open Hand and Jerusalem House.

Ticket prices for Memento Mori are $25 and will be available in early March by cash or check at Brushstrokes, Outwrite Books, Poster Hut and The Boy Next Door

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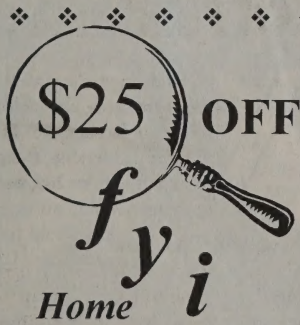

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The Week of Prayer

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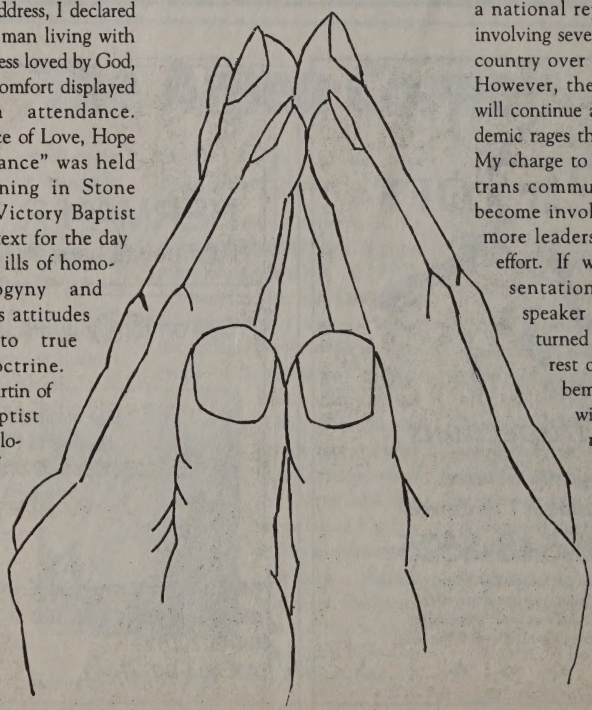
CDC, and presentations by local volunteer coordinators from AID Atlanta, A.E.S.M. and Sisterlove. On Wednesday morning, Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church hosted "Positively Living With HIV/AIDS" which provided information pertinent to PWAs such as nutrition tips, drug trial data, women's resources, legal rights, etc. Sevenanda, the Little 5-Points healthfood oasis, had a booth displaying organically grown fruits, beverages and literature. The evening service at Wesley featured a foot-stompin' praise and worship by Prophet Michael Dowdell and a special dance ministry performed by pre-teens.

During my address, I declared myself as a gay man living with HIV who is no less loved by God, despite the discomfort displayed by some in attendance. "Worship Service of Love, Hope and Remembrance" was held Thursday evening in Stone Mountain at Victory Baptist Church. The text for the day confronted the ills of homophobia, misogyny and AIDSphobia as attitudes antithetical to true Christian doctrine. Pastor Kathi Martin of Emmanuel Baptist Church led an eloquent prayer of remembrance for loved ones who've made their transition. Ironically, Victory Baptist allegedly declined an openly gay man's offer to address the congregation, in favor of an infected woman. Was it plain ole homophobia or excessive caution? Is there a difference?

"Taking Charge of Our Minds, Bodies and Future" focused on reaching our youth and was hosted by Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur. Youth outreach workers engaged the audience in role play exercises demonstrating adults' inability to discuss sexuality openly with their young.

The last day of this momentous Week began early Saturday morning (7 AM!) at the Piedmont Park gazebo. A handful of stalwarts braved the chill-to-the-bone weather to sing and pray for the victory of this "movement." Minister Marvin Quick administered a stirring call for unity among the Week of Prayer planners. Mid-morning service was conducted at Believe & Receive Christian Sabbath Fellowship, home base for Pastor Julia Robinson, Chairperson for the Week of Prayer Planning Committee. Song and dance ministry were offered and Ms. Pernessa Seal herself made a surprise appearance. We returned to Wesley Chapel for the Closing Service.



Proclamations from President Clinton, Mayor Bill Campbell, and Decatur Mayor Elizabeth Wilson were read aloud. Minister Marvin Moss delivered a poignant message recalling the loss of his brother due to AIDS. As Pastor Robinson put it, "This is not the end, this is only the beginning."

The Week of Prayer is part of a national replication project involving several sites across the country over the next 3 years. However, the Week of Prayer will continue as long as the epidemic rages through our village. My charge to the black/gay/les/trans community is that we become involved and take on more leadership roles in this effort. If we had more representation, no openly gay speaker would have been turned away. Let us not rest on our laurels and bemoan the situation without action. We must reclaim God's love as our own as well as remembering that the Creator loves us just us as we are!

PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name: . . . . . Wendy O'Neil

Age: 22

Status: . . . . . Involved

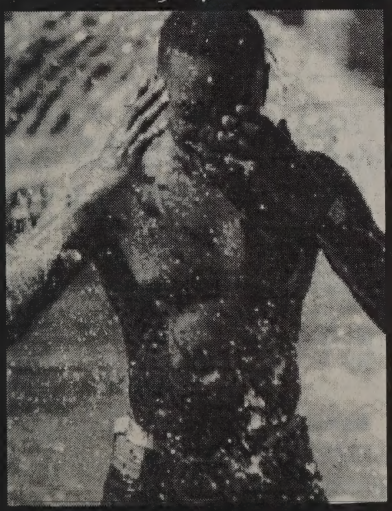
Career: . . . . . Student of Fine Arts, Spelman College

Hometown: . . New Orleans

Latest Book: . "The Good Negress," by A.J. Vardelle

Former co-chair and one of several founding members of Spelman College's Lesbian/Bisexual Alliance, last summer Wendy participated in the NGLTF First Youth Leadership Training Institute. As a result of her participation, she was featured in a segment of In The Life T.V. Her current project is a monthly story circle because "I need to hear us tell our stories and celebrate myself with my sisters." She graduates in December of '96.

RON SINGLETON
213.937.6538



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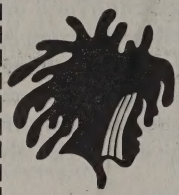

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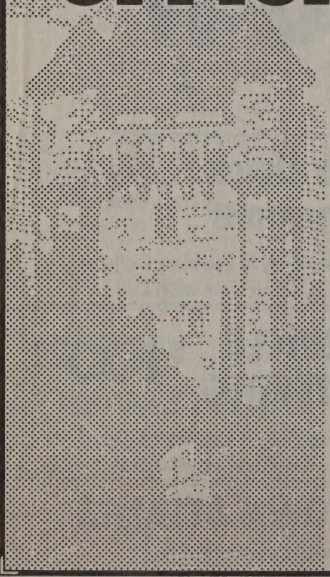

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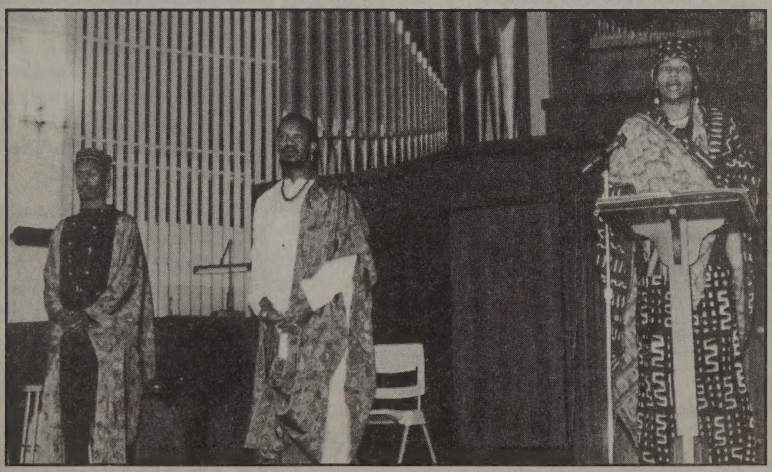
The Atlanta Lambda Center's Black Gay & Lesbian History Celebration at Sister's Chapel, Spelman College

Top (l to r): Pat Hussain, Caron Williams, Tony Daniels, Elias Farajaje-Jones, Aelista Bristow, Joan Garner, Charlene Cothran, Traci Fields. Kneeling (l to r): Mandy Carter, Queen, Mary Ann Adams, Sonya Hemphill.



Tony Daniels leads Adodi Muse in a theatrical performance.

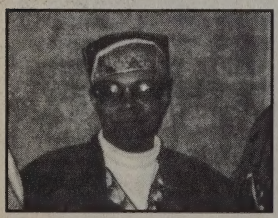
Seventh Annual Bayard Rustin Breakfast

Candace Boyce, Bartholomew T. Casimir, and Pam Scott will be Keynote Speakers

The AIDS Action Committee and the Bayard Rustin Breakfast Committee will host the 7th Annual Bayard Rustin Breakfast, "Reclaiming The Vision of Our Forebears, Continuing The Spiritual Journey," Saturday, April 20, 1996, in Roxbury, Massachusetts.

The Bayard Rustin Breakfast Committee's goal is to keep in the tradition of the previous breakfast speakers like the late literary greats Marlon Riggs and Steven Corbin, and the dancer extraordinaire, Bill T. Jones.

Candace Boyce, is a New York City community activist and founder of African Ancestral Lesbians United for Societal Change (formerly Salsa Soul).



Candace Boyce, founder of African Ancestral Lesbians United for Societal Change.

Recently, Boyce received the Mable Hampton Award from the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum for her outstanding contributions to the lesbian community.

Bartholomew T. Casimir is the Program Director for the Indiana State Department of Health and is the current chair of the National Association of People with AIDS and has been living with HIV since 1993.

Pam Scott is the third speaker and will give the community perspective about HIV/AIDS. Pam is a certified AIDS Educator conducting public speaking for Cambridge Cares About AIDS, and the American Red Cross. Pam is also HIV+.

This year's highlights includes the 1st Bayard Rustin Award for Courage given to an individual who exemplifies the principles of the late great civil rights leader.Imtiyax Hussein is this year's recipient. Mr. Hussein is the founder of Massachusetts Area Asian Lambda Association (MASALA), and the Coordinator of Housing Advocacy at Positive Directions, Boston.

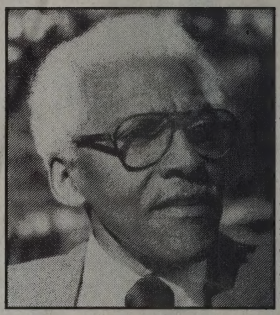


PHOTO: WALTER NAEGLE

Civil Rights and Gay Activist Bayard Rustin.

The chairpeople of this 1996 event are Mia Anderson, Artistic Director of the local Drag Kings, Sluts and Goddesses, and Philip Robinson, poet, anthologized in The Road Before Us 100 Black Gay Poets and In The Life, A Black Gay Anthology.

The breakfast annually brings more than 400 lesbians, gays and bisexuals of color. This year's breakfast will be held at Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries Reception Hall, located at 1010 Harrison Avenue in Roxbury, MA from 10:30 AM to 2:00 PM.

For more information about the breakfast, contact Belynda Dunn at (617) 450-1287.

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Livin' THE SINGLE LIFE

by Steven G. Fullwood

Sistagirls, brothermen, do you fear being alone? Tremble at the thought of being single? Are you in an abusive or difficult relationship? Listen up:

Sit your butt down. Keep it simple.

These words came from Tibet's Honorable Dalai Lama to Iyanla Vanzant. Vanzant, author of the best-selling Acts of Faith, daily meditations for African American folk, shared this and other thoughts while giving the luncheon keynote at a recent women's conference in Washington, D.C. Okay, so the Dalai didn't say "sit your butt down," I added that part.

I've taken a look at what I consider to be the "relationship myth" in America—its form and function, and why so many of us cannot envision ourselves as both single and happy.

The myth, as I see it, takes no prisoners. Nearly everything in our culture places couplings over singleness, marriages over single women and men, two over one. On television talk shows abound with people obsessed with how-to-get-where-to-go-how-to-walk-talk-steal-cheat-lie-crawl-beg for that special someone. Magazines boast ten simple ways to get that special someone to fall in love with you. Radios broadcast soft sensual sounds, some honey-laden voice sister testifies, "I have nothing, nothing, nothing if I don't have you."

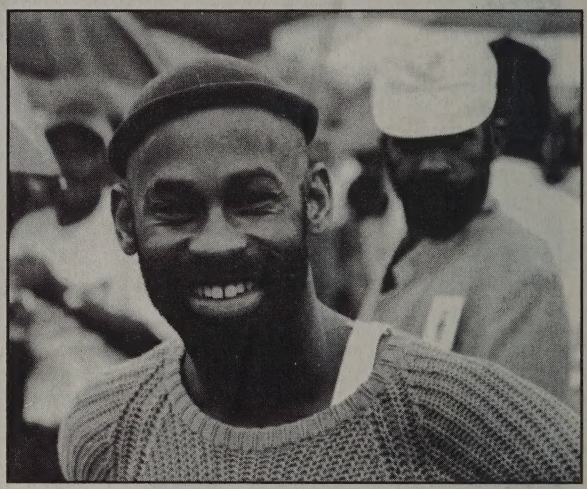

PHOTO: RON SINGLETON PHOTOGRAPHY

Well, now. These types of cultural products can be terribly distracting while you're trying to do the shopping.. You might hum along with Billie Holiday at the market while reaching for the Raisin Bran. You stop, slap your head and wonder, where, oh, where can your loverman or loverwoman be. That's when it hits you. You don't have anyone.

And that's okay. Most of us fail to recognize one simple sobering fact about our lives: we do indeed have someone—ourselves. That is, if we truly want ourselves.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

PROFILE OF A MAN

Name: . . . . . Andréas Goree

Age: 28

Status: . . . . . Single

Career: . . . . . Telecommunications Manager

Hometown: . . St. Louis, MO

Latest Book: . "And This Too Shall Pass," by E. Lynn Harris

As a member of the advisory board of In The Life, Inc. (Atlanta's Black Lesbian/Gay Pride Committee), Andréas is busy helping to build the structure of the organization. He dedicates his work to the surviving partners and families of those who have lost loved ones to HIV/AIDS.

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For more information, contact Raymond E. Dumas, Sr., National Community Organizer, San Francisco, 415/356-8136.

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Living the Single Life

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

Understand what you're up against. One would be pressed to find expressions of self-love in this society not linked to an eventual coupling or a new pair of Reebok. The message is: Love yourself to make yourself suitable for someone else. Unconditional self-love is a hard attribute to find in someone these days. Most folk can't see self-love as a perpetual liberating state of being. After all, if you loved yourself unconditionally, who'd need designer clothing or Maybelline? Surely these products, and other such products' value would be profoundly different; maybe they'd cease to exist.

But let's go slow. Don't want no brains to explode.

While it may hold that you are a product of a coupling (immaculate conceptions aside) you can live a healthy life as a single person. Really, I swear. You just have to get used to the fact that what will come to you, will come. In the time being, you should be having the time of your life. Life is good, I tell you. You can learn alot about yourself when your alone. Be thankful you're not in a debilitating or an abusive relationship. You can do whatever you choose.

Reflect, sisters and brothers, reflect. It may be difficult to go to that space alone initially, but it's the only way to mature. After awhile, you can participate more fully in loving someone, because you've placed love for yourself first. Surround yourself with friends who challenge you to be all that you can be and more. Now and then, you can luxuriate in a union, be in a coupling that doesn't corrode your sense of being, or compromise who you are. You'll quickly realize being in a couple isn't a prerequisite for being human, being happy or healthy. No man or woman can rescue you, because, well, you're doing just fine.

A burst of light.

You might say, well, what about single bars, single functions and the like, but y'all know the aim: a coupling. Hers and hers, his and his and his and hers towels.

The way this culture shoves the relationship myth down our throats is terribly disenabling for your average Joe or Joanne. If you're single, the implication is "you're available: ever waiting with chocolates and flowers, in your best shirt of dress. You're never at your best, you know, because even the hint of a potential suitor makes our body quake with yearning. Got your mouth all tasted up for some good, good loving. You ooze desperation.

Face it, you're hideous. You prop yourself up, all doused in perfume or aftershave lotion, only to be picked up or over, most likely by some moron, that you, in your right mind, wouldn't go near unless there's a gun poking you in the back.

I speak from experience, from nights on the prowl for unyielding, soft brown flesh; fantasies, if you will, never to appear at all, only to exist in my busy little head. Which is, in all practicality, where most fantasies should reside. But that's fodder for another column, so I'll stop there.

Anyway, I was left with getting acquainted with myself, which to my surprise, was quite all right. Difficult at first, but tremendously satisfying in a way no one else could satisfy me. While going through this process, I thought to myself, Am I worthless if no one tells me otherwise? The answer knocked me out. Nothing knocks you out like the truth; or rather, a perceived truth. Surely, this can't be it, I thought, the end, that's all folks. It was then I began to investigate ways I could affirm myself, be good to myself in ways I hadn't previously considered. In a relatively short time, my health improved, my spiritual life flourished and my career blossomed. Child, I looked at my feet and they were new.

Now don't get me wrong. I've got nothing against a good dicking and all, but when it comes at the expense of my self-esteem, alarms go off, I come to my senses and come correct. I change my behavior and the offensive party is given the boot. Being in a relationship should free you up, not chain you down. If you give love, there's no reason not to expect it returned tenfold. If your love isn't returned, move on, baby. When you love yourself, you're never on your last, never feeling worthless or insignificant. You'll demand the best for and from yourself. It's what you deserve, remember that.

Being single is not the period in between your relationships; its quite the opposite. You're the only one who can see to it that your needs are met. And to do it properly, you'll have to give some serious thought to what those needs are, alone, being still.

Face it, you'll always have yourself.

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WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

"In Flight"

In Flight Women's Amateur Athletic Union Basketball Team is one of the newest teams in the country on the semi-pro level and based in Washington, D.C.

In Flight has now expanded to a nationally ranked team since placing runner-up in the 1995 National Amateur Athletic Union Championship held at Catholic University, Washington D.C. Women's teams from all over the country participate in this tournament each year.

The primary purpose of the team's existence is to promote women's basketball, to provide women with a forum to exhibit their talents and take them to a women's professional league to begin on the East Coast.

In Flight is a memorial team dedicated to a woman who coached Baltimore inner-city women. Myra Harrision, better known as "Fuzzy," now deceased, guided women in organized sports. She stood for discipline and leadership.

The team will participate in the AAU National, April 19–21 at Catholic University, the HoopHeads/Queen Latifah Pro Classic April 26–28 at Howard University, and HoopHeads again in Los Angeles July 6th weekend.

Queen Latifah (center), sponsor of HoopHeads Women's Basketball Pro Classic, congratulates her team after a game.

In conjunction with Sophisticated Ladies Productions, In Flight will be holding a series of fundraisers for new team uniforms, travel expenses and various other needs. The first event will be held at Circle Bar on April 20 in Washington, D.C. from 10 PM–3 AM and feature D.J. India.

The second fundraiser is a very special event honoring Queen Latifah, her team, and HoopHeads for their hard work and dedication to the support of women's basketball over the years. This event is an exclusive VIP party; you must be 25 years-old to attend. It will be held April 26 at the Foxtrappe, located at 700 Water St., S.W. in Washington, D.C. For an invitation, contact Ms. Vicki of Sophisticated Ladies at (301) 231-4028. The third fundraising event will be held Saturday evening after the Pro Classic on April 27 from 10 PM–3 AM at Jenny's Show Lounge located in Waterside Mall on M Street. S.W. Five levels of secured underground parking are available for your safety.

Plans are now underway for an Olympic event in Atlanta that will benefit African American AIDS organizations. The one night gala will attract more than 300 athletes and their partners. The event is by invitation only. Tickets are $100. Corporate sponsors are lining up including Venus Magazine and one of the nation's largest beer brewers. For additional information, contact Venus at (404) 622-8069.

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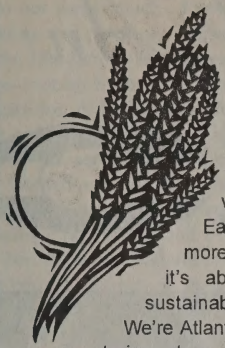

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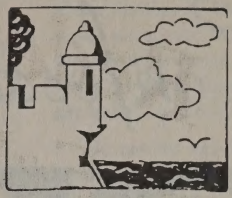

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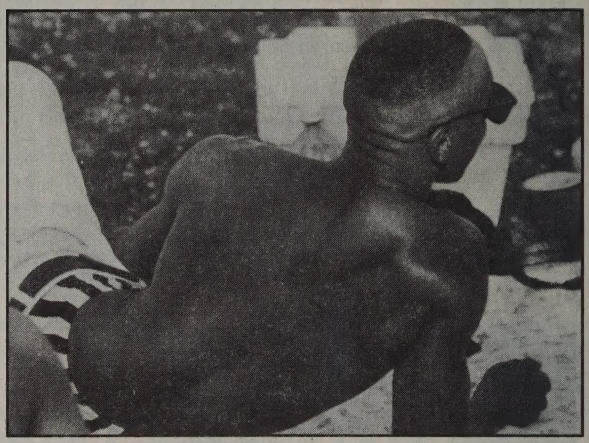
Confessions Of An OREO

For many weeks I have been in a constant state of awareness that I am an oreo, an uncomfortable situation in which to find oneself.

I was labeled this by a friend after revealing to him my opinion on the O.J. Simpson verdict. I will spare you my opinion; but, the fact that, because of it, I was labeled an oreo should be evidence as to what it is.

This was not the first time I had been labeled as such, placed into that category of African-Americans who are in some obscure way...white-like. Having been called bougie, uppity, sidity, I was not overly shocked by my friends statement. I was however troubled, because I was once again reminded of the way in which we as African-American gay and lesbian people, place ourselves into limiting, unfortunate categories.

I did not take my friend's comment to heart—not too much. I only saw it as an example of the lingering divisions in the African-American comm. I was, however, deeply concerned that being called an oreo, like so many other labels, would only reinforce my disgust with labels



and their place in African-American community.

I asked other friends, gay and straight—all , "Would you consider me an oreo?" All of them replied, "No," and wondered why I was giving this fleeting comment so much attention. One acquaintance with a biting sense of humor, replied, "James, I have always just considered you a strong Black ...woman." This gave me something else to think about, but I still wasn't satisfied. An oreo...me?

I was bothered that one of my gay brothers would see me in this light, and more disturbed by the fact that I was actually taking time out of my life to even think about the whole matter.

Deciding that the answer was somewhere hidden in my short history on the blue planet, I thought...I grew up in a family, like most others—dysfunctional. My mother was a teacher; my father was trained as an engineer and spent a great deal of his life battling substance abuse. We were middle class. We lived in a small town in East Tennessee. We talked slow, traveled often. I lived the quintessential, suburban, Southern experience. But,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39

this could describe any number of people.

I began to assess my lifestyle. I do not party...much. I enjoy reading and painting. I speak little, like jazz. I went to college—not an historically Black institution of higher learning, but one, gasp, that during the Civil War, served as a hospital for Confederate soldiers. But don' tell anybody. I cannot convincingly say "w'zup" and I try my best to use who and whom in the correct manner. I am not stylish—because I can't afford to be. I am not a Republican. But this is neither here nor there Black or white.

With "OREO... OREO... OREO...," pulsing at the back of my mind, I even began to monitor my actions. Should I really order this cranberry sweater from J. Crew? I hope no one saw me buying that Cecilia Bartoli CD. Should I really disclose that I enjoyed Darieck Scott's Traitor to the Race better than James Earl Hardy's B-Boy Blues? If someone sees me out with this fair-skinned man will they smirk and say, "I knew he always had it in him."

I am simply the product of my environment. I am no more or less Black or gay because of it.

One must only look through the personal ads in any urban periodical to see the proliferation of labels and categories in which we, as African-American gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered persons, place ourselves. I am becoming accustomed to labels: femme, fat, chubby, lipstick lesbian, college boy, flaming queen, diesel dyke; moreover, if one slips and makes the statement that he or she will be satisfied, in a relationship, with a partner who is merely devoted...well, no one believes you?

"Girl, what if he's rough trade?" And. "He doesn't make enough money." And "She thinks she's the shit." And.

On numerous occasions, I have felt that I would never meet anyone because most men can't get beyond my belly. Fat. Oreo. Femme. College Boy. Flaming Queen. Chubby. All labels, all painfully divisive...all serving as fences. I will stay in here. You stay out there. They are all dogs. They think they're better. I'll put up with his shit because I can't do any better. I am this; you are that.

The sadness lies in that we label others and then label ourselves, or accept the labels assigned to us by others. Fences. The same actions we decry the white lesbian and gay community for practicing are almost identical to the ones we practice on our gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered brother and sisters of color.

I must say that I simply... am. My worth and place in our community should not be decided on the fact that I like Othello better than Ma Rainey's Black Bottom or enjoy equally the works of Essex Hemphill and Walt Whitman.

One must realize that racists and homophobes, if struck with the notion to harm a gay person of color, are not going to pull out charts and decide, based on an individual's personality, appearance and demeanor, if he or she if fully Black or gay.

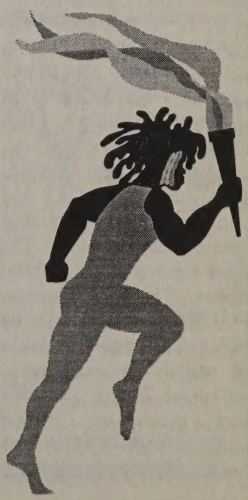
They will not go through our CD collections and compare the number of Broadway Musical Cast Recordings to acid jazz selections. They will not worry about whether he is a plumber or she is a doctor. They do not care about paychecks. They will see us as African-American and gay and will seek to do us harm.

The persons who deny us our rights, beat us down and even kill us do not give a damn about this system of caste we have created within our community. To them we simply are Black and gay. In even their eyes we are a community.

We are individuals, yet part of a whole.

If those who seek to harm us see no divisions in our community—why must we? Is it such a big step for us to move forward an begin to see ourselves as one?

An oreo...me? Humph!



The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

Life of Audre Lorde chronicled: The life and legacy of Audre Lorde, the late feminist poet and human rights activist, will be on display as a photo-documentary exhibition co-sponsored by Gerber/Hart Library and Archives and the University of Illinois at Chicago. The exhibit, called "Transcending Silence: The Life and Poetic Legacy of Audre Lorde," will run through April 5th at the Chicago Circle Center's A. Montgomery Ward Gallery. For more information contact Randy Snyder at (312) 338-5482.

Olympic City To Host Road Race. The site of 1996 Olympic Games events, Athens, GA, will also be the site of the AIDS Coalition of Northeast Georgia's Fifth Annual Show of Feet 5K Run, Walk, and Roll on May 25, 1996. The race begins at 8 AM at the Athens Regional Medical Center on Prince Avenue. The $10 pre registration fee includes a T-shirt. The late registration fee is $12. Medals will be awarded to top shirt you've ever seen. Medals will be awarded to top finishers in each age group. For more information, call Kerri Edwards at (706) 542-2437.

Cases of AIDS reported each year in Georgia are increasing fastest among women and African Americans, and also increasing faster in small towns and rural areas than in urban centers, according to Kathleen E. Toomey, MD., MPH, state epidemiologist and director of the Epidemiology and Prevention Branch of the Georgia Dept. of Human Resources Division of Public Health.

The report also shows that African Americans were 68% of all new cases reported in 1994, up from 57% in 1990. Much of this increase took place outside of metropolitan Atlanta. "This information is helping us direct our prevention and treatment programs to areas with the greatest need", says Toomey. "We are in the seconds year of a community planning, partnership with grassroots health activists, people who are HIV positive, and health professional from all over Georgia."

The World Is Watching! Help ensure a fair and accurate image of our community. GLAAD-Atlanta will host a Media Breakfast on May 9 to introduce local gay and lesbian community leaders and activists to the national and international media to help ensure fair coverage during the Olympics and Summer of 1996. Media professionals and reporters from national and global T.V., radio, magazines and newspapers, wire services will have the opportunity to explore issues of importance to the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered communities. Come to Mary Mac's Tearoom May 9th from 7:30–10:00 AM. For information, call 404-876-1398 or e-mail GLAAD ATL@aol.com.

North Carolina Mobilization '96 is a grassroots campaign led by African American lesbian activist Mandy Carter. We are dedicated to the certainty that Jesse Helms can be defeated! Our People of Color Committee is led by an African American bi woman. The group urges gay North Carolinians across the U.S. to "Come Back Home!" for NC Pride '96, June 7–9 in Winston Salem. African American LesBiGays will have a strong, visible presence at NC Pride this year and we're going to have FUN! while brainstorming how to defeat Helms this year! Call (919) 828-3311 for more information.

Lesbian Photo Reinstalled at Women's Rights Park. A

photo of a women holding a sign that reads "BLACK, LESBIAN, FEMINIST" which was removed from a display at Women's Rights National Historical Park on December 8, 1995, was reinstalled to it's original location on February 12, 1996 The photo which had been temporarily placed in a "closet," than moved to a less visible location in the museum, was part of a lobby display depicting women of all backgrounds, politics and agendas. Superintendent Joanne Hanley was responsible for removing the photo in what lesbians in the area are calling a homophobic act. The photo is the work of well-known photographer Bettye Lane, and is a straightforward documentary image. This was the only photo that had been removed.

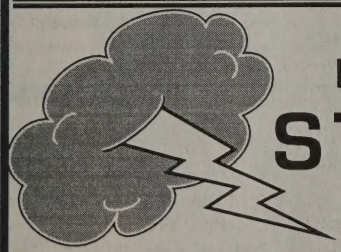
A Coke and A Smile. The Coca-Cola Company, one of Atlanta's largest employers and a highly visible international. presence in this Olympic year, recently extended it non-discrimination policy to include "sexual orientation." This significant step forward should be rewarded by a letter of thanks to the Chairman and CEO of Coca-Cola, Roberto Goizueta. In your response, encourage to Mr. Goizueta to take the next step and extend health and other benefits to domestic partners of employees. Write to Mr. Goizueta at P.O. Drawer 1734, Atlanta, GA, 30301 ; to respond via the World Wide Web, go to http://www.coca-cola.com/co/equeries.html.

AIDS Education/Services for Minorities (AESM), a certified nonprofit community based IDS Service Organization (ASO) sponsored an Art Auction/ Banquet. Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney and Congressman John Lewis were guest speakers. All proceeds benefited AESM programs including the AESM House.

National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum to Honor Phil Wilson and Ruth Waters for "106 Years of Activism" The National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum will honor its founders, Phil Wilson and Ruth Waters at a gala event in Los Angeles on April 28. Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan and U.S. Congresswoman Maxine Waters will serve as Honorary Co-Chairs.

The event, titled "106 Years of Activism," honors Phil Wilson, who will retire this month as Director of Public Policy for AIDS Project LA and Ruth Waters, a widely known activist in the lesbian and gay community. Wilson celebrates his 40th birthday and Waters her 66th birthday this year.

The evening will include a silent auction, dinner and tribute at the Universal City Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles. For information call the Forum office in LA at (213) 964-7820 or in Washington at (202)736-3729.



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Venus™ MAGAZINE FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

Blues in the Night

Jomandi Productions announces the Broadway hit of the late 70's, "Blues in the Night," as its final offering for the 17th Anniversary Mainstage Season running April 26–May 19, at the 14th Street Playhouse.

"Blues in the Night" uses the great blues and jazz songs of the 1920's and 30's to explore the lives of three women and a saloon singer in a cheap Chicago hotel during the course of a long memory-filled evening. The songs celebrate a great period and style of American music and explore the influences and roots of jazz as it grew from the Blues.

It once was said, "Blues is to jazz what yeast is to bread." The blues melodies of Bessie Smith, Jimmy Cox, Alberta Hunter and others are mixed and contrasted with the songs of Harold Arlen, Andy Razaf, Johnny Mercer and other greats of the jazz world to paint the full spectrum of the great musical form, starring Theresa Hightower.

"(T)he great blues and jazz songs of the 1920's and 30's (are used) to explore the lives of three women and a saloon singer in a cheap Chicago hotel during the course of a long memory-filled evening. "

For groups and information, call (404) 876-6346. For advance tickets, call Ticketmaster Arts Hotline at (404) 817-8700. The 14th Street Box Office opens April 15th, call (404) 733-4750. Tickets are $12–$25 and shows run Wednesday through Saturday, 8 PM, and Sundays at 3 PM.

Khamit Kinks
by Annu

Good News! Khamit Kinks is here to service your locks no matter what stage they're in.

For beginning locks we offer palm rolling or the coil method. If you've already started your locks, we can help you maintain them. We offer the basics as well as specialty treatments including: shampoo, conditioning, hot oil, henna, scalp treatments, manicuring and clipping, joining weak locks, herbal rinses, etc.

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April 26
thru
May 19, 1996

Blues in the Night

14th Street Playhouse • Shows 8PM Wed–Sat, 3 PM Sun.

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Original Vocal Arr. & Musical Direction by
Chapman Roberts
Orchestration & Addt'l Vocal Arr. by
Sy Johnson

Chicago in the late 1930's
Three women and a saloon singer in a "cheap hotel."
Their Lives...
Their memories...
and the music that gets them through the lonely night.

TICKETS

Opening Night and Reception	$25
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ARTS LINE

Tickets for all main stage performances are available through TicketMaster Arts Hotline:

404/817-8700

CONFERENCES

UJIMA

An institute for HIV prevention among gay and bisexual men of African Descent in the South April 25-27, 1996 Harvey Hotel Jackson, MS. for info cantact Raymond Dumas, Sr. (415) 356-8136

Keep Your Head To the Sky:

Queers of Color Coming Together, April 19, 1996, Ohio State Univerdity, Columbus. Contact: Diversity of Ohio, (614) 486-5664

XI International Conference on AIDS

Vancouver, Britiish Columbia, Canada, July 7-12, 1996. 12,000 to 15,000 expected to participate. Volunteer Hotline (604) 683-7781. For all other info call (604) 668-3225, Email-aids96@hivnet.ubc.ca

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4th International Bisexual Conference

Berlin Germany. May 24–27, 1996. (619) 542-0088

FISHING TRIP

New York- Enjoy Cape Cod Porgy fishing at it best on the

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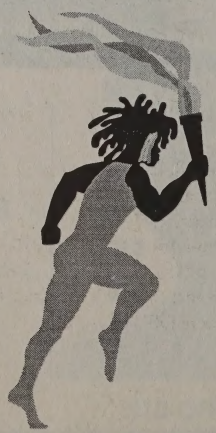
May 20-23, 1996. Roundtrip from New York to Cape Cod, 3 nights at Hyannis Holiday Motel, 2 full days fishing, welcome reception, and more. $310.00 pp. Contact Verdie: 718-231-7248.



FESTIVALS

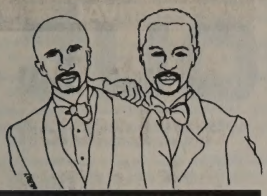
Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Arts Festival

Don't miss the hottest artists in Downtown Decatur April 11–14, 1996. Events includ Gallery Opening & Reception; Dianné Aldrich Company Striip; a presentation of *The Vicar's Wife* by David Mowers; *Sensuality* by Sonya Hemphill; *Late Night with David Lesbian*; Poetry Reading; and an Artist Market. Festival Passes: $20 available at Brushtrokes, Outwrite Books, Charis Books and More (cash or check only). Call the Info Line at 404/874-8710 for more information.

Washington D.C.'s

BLACK LESBIAN & GAY PRIDE WEEKEND

May 24-26, Friday May 24 - Black Pride Kickoff reception; Saturday May 25 Cultural Arts Festival, Memorial Vigil, Boat Ride; Sunday May 26 Main Event outdoor Festival; Package deal $65.00. Black Lesbian and Gay Pride Development, Inc. (202)722-4780, Email blgpd@aol.com.



FUNDRAISERS

Join Venus & Friends for a meet

Cynthia McKinney Bar•B•Q Fundraiser

Help send Cynthia back to D.C. as our Congresswoman! Minimum $25 contribution. Sunday April 14 from 5–8 PM at the Venus Office (616 Ormewood Avenue—call 404/622-8069 for directions/ reservations) Delicious food and a chance to affect the future of the country and your community—what else do you have to do on a Sunday afternoon? **BE THERE!**

ENVISION EQUALITY

at the 1996 HRC Dinner/Dance at the Hyatt Regency Ballroom in Atlanta on Saturday, May 4, 1996. Enjoy cocktails, dinner and dancing while you meet friends. Bid on items at our Silent Auction. Special rates arranged with Hyatt Regency Atlanta; call 404-577-1234 for information. Honorary Chairperson Coretta Scott King. Featuring Dan Butler of *Frasier*, Chastity Bono, Sean Sasser and Elizabeth Birch, the Executive Director of HRC. For tickets or more information, call 770-840-6969.

MEETINGS

ALL PEOPLE OF COLOR GROUPS

Please meet at Kalo's Coffeehouse, 1248 Clairmont Road, Sat., April 13 at 2 PM to discuss plans for a multi-cultural float in the Pride Parade.

PARTIES

The Interstate Champagne Charity Ball

Pre-Ball Party, Fri, April 12 10-3, casual attire. Champagne Charity Ball Sat, April 13 10-3, semi-formal. Days Inn, 2700 NY Ave NE, Wash., D.C., $40.00, advance sales only. Contact Babi Moore (301) 596-6167.

Annual Black & Gold Dance

New York's Marc Ballroom 27 Union Sq. West (between 15th & 17th Sts) NY, NY. Sat., April 27, 1996, 10-3, $35.00 contact Bess Knowlings (718) 992-9073

Atlanta - Brothers of 30 Something Special presents

Elements of Style

Pre-Easter Bunny Hop, Saturday April 6, 1996 10-3, $10.00 performances by Adode Muse and Enigma. Club Ultimate 4640 Washington Rd. College Park (404)305-9366

Aries Celebration Dance

Sisters of 30 Something Atlanta, Sat. April 13, 1996, 10-3 a.m, $7.00.

RETREATS

Awakening Brotherhood to our Rhythm & Culture

Black Gay Men's Retreat April 5-7, 19996, Boston, Mass. Sponsored by Brother II Brother. Contact Craig Cobb (617) 267-0849 ext 220

OUT & about

Writer/activist Sabrina Soujourner with award recipient Jeannett Williams of D.C.'s Black Lesbian Support Group.

National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Award recipients (l to r) Vallerie Wagner, Ta'Shia Asanti, Candace Boyce and Steve Wakefield.

The Atlanta contingent gathered for a caucas in Dallas during the National Black Gay and Leadership Conference.

Queen, co-chair of In The Life, Inc., and poet extraordinaire, greeted her royal subjects at a gala banquet in in Dallas.

ORGANIZATIONS

Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

Abundant Grace Community Church—743 Virginia Avenue. Sun. Worship 7:30 PM (404) 815-0036.

ADODI New York—A self-supporting organization of gay and bisexual men of African Heritage. 432 West 43rd St, Ste. 8045, N.Y., N.Y. 10036

African Ancestral Lesbian United for Societal Changed (Formerly Salsa Soul)—(212) 620-7310. Candice.

African American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA)—(404) 908-7371.

AIDS Education Services for Minorities (AESM)—P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, GA 30337. (404) 753-2900 or (404) 743-7733.

AIDS Prevention Education for Asians and Pacific Islanders—culturally and lingustically appropriate services. Contact Jennifer Kim (770) 936-0969 em: KCSC1996@aol.com

AIDS Response Knoxville—Suite 411, 109 Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919, (615) 450-2437.

AIDS Services in Asian Communities, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 212, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1938

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church—575 Boulevard. Sunday, 7 PM, evenings, 8:30 PM, (404) 622-1154.

American Cancer Society—Lesbian and Gay Cancer Support Groups. (404) 841-0550. Meets 3rd Thursday of each month.

Atlanta Lambda Center, Inc.—P.O. Box 15180, Atlanta, GA 30333. (404) 662-9010.

A. Lorde Collective—African-American Lesbians Organized to Renew Dignity and Empowerment. Hotline: (313) 862-3396.

AYA Institute—dedicated to the education and mental health of our community. P.O. Box 3824, Jersey City, N.J. 07303-3824 or (201) 451-3412.

Bisexual Resource Line—A combined voicemail project of several Bay Area Bi Groups. (415) 703-7977.

Bisexual Womyn of Colour—BWOC since 1991. P.O. Box 020136, Brooklyn, NY 11202-136. (212) 479-7886. Donna Reddy, pres.

Black & White Men Together—POB 1334, Atl., GA 30301-1334. (404) 892-BWMT.

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum—1219 S. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 964-7820. FAX (213) 964-7830.

Black Gay Pride Atlanta—P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, GA 30312. (404) 872-1097.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. (BLGP Inc.)—Box 7184, Washington, DC. 20024.

Black Women's Network—Box 5, 136 Kingsland Height St., London, England, UK/E8/2NS

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)—Meets every Friday at 8 PM at the Amassi Center. 3419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA. For more info, call Ms. Clydis (510) 649-0536.

BLUeS—Bronx Lesbians United in Sisterhood, Event Organization. (212) 330-9196

Boyz of Distinction—P.O. Box 78091, Atl., GA 30532.

Brothers Back-2-Back, Inc.—An African American HIV/AIDS Organization, P.O. Box 11366, Atlanta, GA 30310. Voice: (404) 593-5805.

Chicago Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays—(312) 871-2117.

Cinnamon Productions—Womyn of Color event organizers. (718) 994-0028.

Creation Woman—poets/artists & affiliates meet last Sun. each month. (310) 422-1970.

D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men and Bisexuals—(202) 388-8078.

Dyfferent Gyrl Production—P.O. Box 13346, Atlanta, GA 30324. (404) 908-5340.

Fe*mail—a D.C. publication for Lesbians of Color. P.O. Box 75392, Washington, DC 20013. (202) 546-7040

Friend of Friends—(301) 735-5023; P.O. Box 77075, Washington, D.C. 20013

GALAEI (for Latino gay men), 1233 Locust St., 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 985-3382

Gay and Out Productions—P.O. Box 111, Clarkston, GA 30021-0111. (404) 299-7809

Gay Black Female (GBF)—6312 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 114, Hollywood, CA 90028. (310) 288-6315.

Gay/Lesbian Latino/a Community Organization Out Reach, Inc.—(404) 346-3922 or (800) 441-2437.

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teacher's Network—P.O. Box 5512, Atlanta, Georgia 31107. (404) 872-4320.

Georgia Equality Project—GEP, P.O. Box 78351, Atl, GA 30357-2351. (404) 662-4030

GLAAD—Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. (404) 873-2002.

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)—2103 N. Decatur Rd., Suite 190, Decatur, GA 30033. PH: (404) 377-4258. EM: info@gabc.gaypride.com

Home Free Ministry—P.O. Box 688, Atl., GA 30301. (404) 818-2033.

Hospitality Atlanta—For Women of Color (404) 523-0228.

HRC—Human Rights Campaign. (770) 840-6969.

International Black Writers & Artists—meet 2nd Sunday Bladwin Hills/Crenshaw (213) 964-3721.

Las Buenas Amigas—(212) 868-7816. Carmen, The Gay & Lesbian Center, 208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011.

Latinos En Accion—Youth support group. P.O. Box 15388, Atlanta, GA 30325. (404) 621-5743. Yolanda Leeky, (404) 753-2840.

Lesbians Latinos en Nuestro Ambiente—(707) 292-7705.

LLEGO, National Latino/a Lesbian & Gay Organization—P.O. Box 44483, Wash., DC. 20026.

Malebox—Meeting black men. P.O. Box 75392, Wash., D.C. 20013.

Minority AIDS Project of Philly and Vicinity, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 218, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1937

MOCAA (Men of Color Against AIDS)—Boston, MA. (617) 442-3800

National Assoc. of Black & White Men Together—1747 Connecticut Ave., Washington, DC. 20020. (202) 462-3599.

National Black Women's Health Project—1237 Gordon, Street S.W., Atlanta, GA (404) 758-9590.

North Carolina Mobilization '96—P.O. Box 28718, Raleigh, NC 28718. (918) 828-3311

our cousin's house—An African American AIDS Organization. P.O. Box 10709, Atlanta, GA 30310. (404) 758-0397.

ONYX/Chicago—Leather Social Club for Men of Color and their friends. 1340 W. Irving Park Road, Suite 188, Chicago IL 60613.

Positive Black Lesbians United (PBLU)—P.O. Box 655, Avondale Estates, GA 30002. (404) 250-7950.

Pink Triangle Productions—Gay Female Entertainment Party Source. (770) 723-7292.

Project Open Hand, Atlanta—(404) 525-4620. Home delivered meals for people with AIDS related illness.

Project AZUKA, Inc.—An AIDS organization for women. P.O. Box 9173, Savannah, GA 31402. (912) 233-6733.

Pyramid Productions—Cultural Shows & Dances. (718) 622-5093.

Q-GLU—Queens Gays & Lesbians United. (718) 639-4951.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church—Box 50047, Atl., GA 30302. (404) 388-4624.

SAGE—Senior Action in a Gay Environment. (212) 741-2247.

SALGA—South Asian Lesbian Gay Association; P.O. Box 50, Cooper Station, NY, NY 10276-0050; (212) 294-2550; Email: salganyc@dorsai.org

Second Sunday Discussion Group—POB 310, Atlanta, GA 30301. (404) 325-7321.

Shades of Brown—Professional Womyn/Men of Color. (212) 439-1024.

Shades of Ebony Connections—For Women of Color, Dallas, (214) 570-5795.

Sisters of 30 Something Special—(404) 350-9758.

Sister Love, Inc.—(404) 753-7733, (404) 753-1500.

Sophisticated Ladies—Lesbian Group for Mature Women of Color. (202) 788-1866.

Southern Conference of Black Gay Men—P.O. Box 212421, Columbia S.C. 29221

Spelman College Lesbian Bi-Sexual Alliance—710 Peachtree St., Suite 126, Atlanta, GA 30308. (404) 908-5368.

Stonewall Bar Association—Professional organization for attorneys, legal assistants and other related professions. P.O. Box 7708, Atl, GA 30357-0708. (770) 621-4663.

The ADODE MUSE—a black gay male literary group; 348 Berean Ave. S.E., Atlanta, Ga 30312. (404) 521-2515.

The COLOURS Organization, Inc.—1108 Locust St., 1st Floor, Phila. PA 19107. Education, prevention and support programs for sexual minority people of color. For more information, please contact (215) 627-6233.

The Gay and Lesbian Center—208 W. 13th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011.

The Men's Gathering—P.O. Box 190869, Dallas, Texas 75219-0869,(214) 521-5342, ext. 876. Meeting times: 4th Friday of each month, 7 pm

Tres—Dance Parties for Womyn of Color. (718) 670-3643

TRIKONE—An Asian gay and lesbian organization. (404) 892-0475 or (404) 373-8915 trikatl@mindspring.com

ULOAH (United Lesbians of African Heritage)—1626 N. Wilcox Ave., #190, L.A., CA 90028. (213) 960-5051.

Unity, Inc. (for African American gay men), 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 214, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1876

Viva!—Lesbian and Gay Latino Arts Organization. (310) 301-8035.

Woman's Monthly—Periodical calendar for woman's community. 1213 Morningside Dr., Silver Springs, MD 20904

Women in the Life—D.C.'s Black Lesbian party hotline. (202) 667-8078.

Women of Color Breast Cancer Survivors Support Project—8610 S. Sepulveda Blvd, Ste 200, L.A., CA 90045 (310) 216-3200.

WRFG Radio,Gay Graffiti with Deborah Paget—Thursdays, 7-8 PM.**Crossroads with Baldelie Jones**—3rd Thursday, 7-8 PM.**Sister Love, Sister's Time**—6 PM Thursdays"**Alternative Talk**"—2nd/4th Fridays, 6PM.

Yahimba, Lesbians of African Descent—1012 1/2 Dodge, Evanston, IL 60202 or (708) 328-7715

YouthPride—(404) 815-9965,Teen Support Group (13-18 yo) Wed. eve. 6:30-8:00; Young Adult Personal Growth Group (18-24 yo): 8:30-10:00. 1379 Tullie Rd.

ZAMI—Atlanta's premiere African American lesbian organization meets 2nd and 4th Sundays from 6:30 until 8:30 PM. Call (404) 370-1392.

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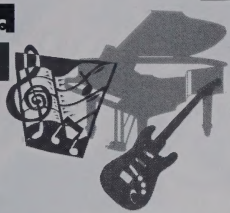

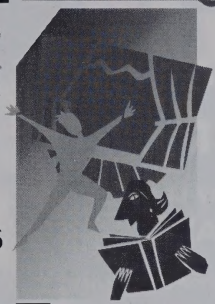

PERFORMANCE

April 11-14, 1996
Decatur, Georgia

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Festival Passes $20.00
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- Gallery Opening & Reception (Thurs., Apr. 11)
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- *The Vicar's Wife* by David Mowers - NYC
- *Sensuality* by Sonya Hemphill - Atl.
- *Late Night With David Lesbian*
- Poetry Reading
- Artist Market

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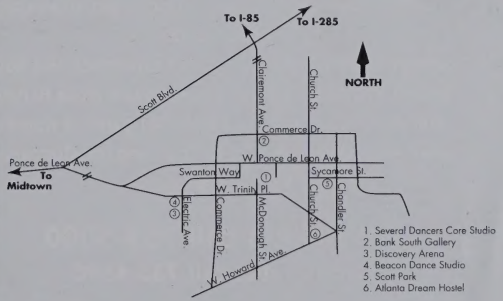
FESTIVAL MAP OF DOWNTOWN DECATUR



James Baldwin's

THE AMEN CORNER

directed by Kenny Leon

APRIL 3 · MAY 5

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James Baldwin draws on his own experience as a boy preacher to create the uplifting story of a pious Harlem storefront preacher named Sister Margaret—a woman you'll remember always for her faith and transformation from fear to love.

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Venus™

April 1996

MAGAZINE

FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

Livin' SINGLE!

CONFESSIONS of an OREO

The Black Church Week of Prayer

WHEN THE SILENCE IS exhumed!

96

We all envision an America where lesbian and gay people are ensured of their basic equal rights.

On May 4 you can help make the vision a reality. Join us at the 1996 Atlanta Human Rights Campaign Dinner at the fabulous new Hyatt Regency Ballroom.

Enjoy cocktails, dinner and dancing while you meet friends and special guests. Bid on items at our pool-side silent auction. And stay overnight at the Hyatt once the festivities are through and take advantage of specially-discounted room rates.

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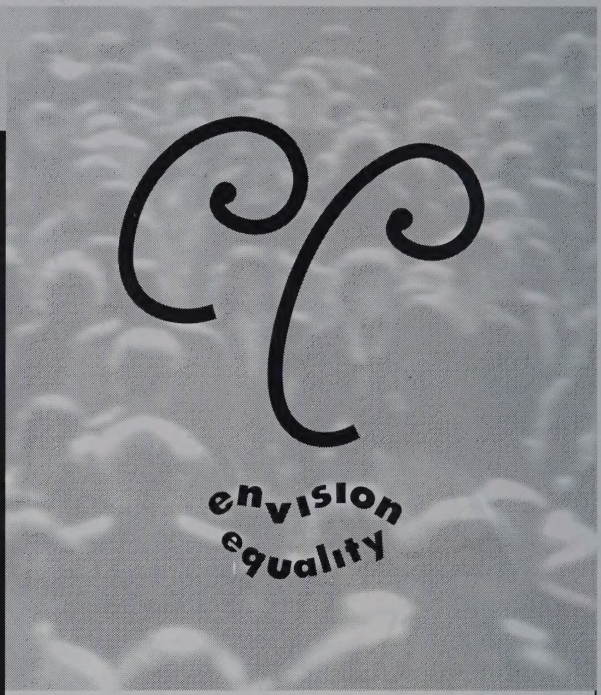
Why wait for someone else to define equality? There's no time like an election year to make sure your voice is heard.



1996 Human Rights Campaign Dinner
The Hyatt Regency Ballroom
Atlanta, GA
Saturday May 4, 1996

Honorary Chairperson - Coretta Scott King

Featuring:
Dan Butler of *Frasier*, Chastity Bono, Sean Sasser
Elizabeth Birch – Executive Director, HRC

For tickets or more information call 770 840-6969
To reserve a room at the Hyatt Regency
at special HRC rates please call 404 577-1234

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

P.O. Box 78401 Atlanta, GA 30357-2401
http://www.hrcusa.org

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August 7, 1996
10:00 p.m.
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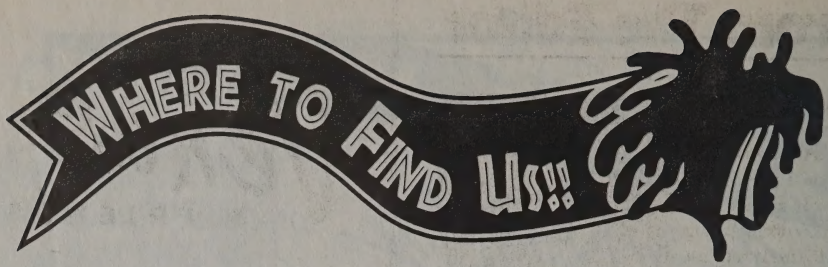

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Lambda Rising Bookstore

From The Editor

I had a conversation with a brother in L.A. who is working on a proposal to travel across the country documenting African-American gay and lesbian communities, and pride events, etc. Sounds exciting to me because, of course, I just knew that Atlanta was at the top of his list... WRONG! He was planning to bypass Atlanta and simply write us off as nothing but a "party town" sighting very little political consciousness among the masses of black gays in the South.

I couldn't hear any more! I had to stop brother in the middle of his pontification and just READ him! First of all, nowhere in the world are black gays and lesbians more conscious of the politics surrounding the issues of AIDS, housing discrimination, access to health care, black church homophobia and racism. Oh, trust me, we are conscious of these politics. Now, I will admit that it has been along time coming to somehow change our community's pinned up anger and frustration into a proactive movement, but the wheels are finally beginning to turn.

New black gay leadership has emerged in Atlanta. Young people who are compassionate about their work and not as concerned about the safety of white gays when speaking about the issues at hand.

It's a new day. Organizations like Second Sunday, a discussion group for black gay men recently held a well-attended political forum. There is new interest in re-establishing CAD, the Coalition of African Descent, a political umbrella for our community. In The Life, Inc., Atlanta's black gay and lesbian pride organization has done phenomenal work to ensure that Atlanta's black gay pride celebration is much more than just a "party." Several of Atlanta's black gay and lesbian leaders have come together to organize a fundraiser to help ensure the re-election of Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney because we recognize the need for direct access to policy makers.

By bypassing Atlanta, I think his documentary will be missing a great piece of black gay history, but that's O.K. because here in the South, we document ourselves.

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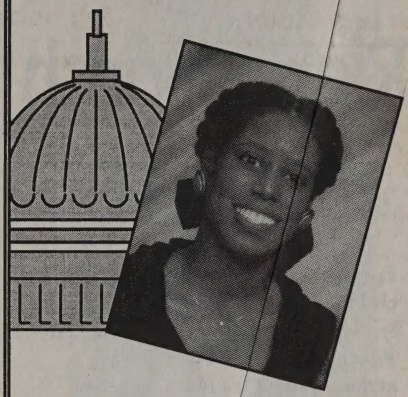

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FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

April 1996
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Venus™ MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

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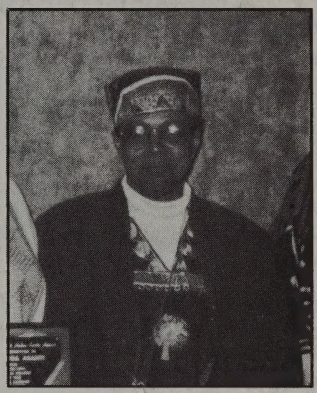
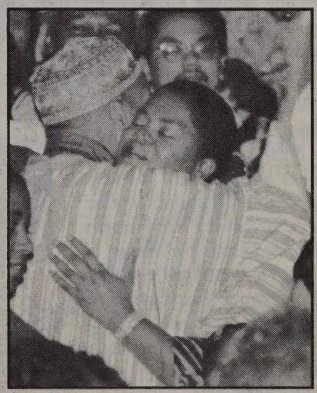
New York's Hottest Latin Ballroom!



Boston Breakfast Honors Bayard Rustin



Black Churches Unite for the Healing of AIDS.

WHEN the silence is EXHUMED

South Florida Mileposts & a Brief Background of People of Afrikan Descent In-the-Life

By Rice Blaque

"The density of the silence surrounding our lives does not make it easy to gain this information."

—*Essex Hemphill*

"In-the-life" is a terminology historically used by those people of Afrikan descent who lead lives (not lifestyles) which other populations label gay, lesbian, bi, transgendered. Gathering historical information from and about South Floridans of Afrikan Descent In-The-Life is a challenge echoed throughout the Afrikan Diaspora

Buried by religious teachings and beliefs, ignored by cultural traditions, distorted by myths, suppressed by fears' realities and the general taboo that "black folks don't air their dirty linen," the silence is deafening.

As a rule, people of Afrikan Descent In-The-Life have not been highly visible in Gay Pride marches and parades, not very vocal in political forums (noting however a growing involvement in feminist politics by Women of Afrikan Descent In-The-Life), and not regular participants in the social landscape of the general lesbian and gay community.

This "invisible life" is not borne of apathy, separatism, or a lack of awareness. The mental, spiritual, emotional and physical survival of People of Afrikan Descent In-The Life has meant developing a suit of armor to combat the Black community's hetrosexism and the gay and lesbian community's racism.

Thus developed an "underground" network of professionals, athletes, teens, seniors, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, daughters, sons, grandparents or someone you know or think you know, who share their secret in a code of silence.

Silent to those outside of their circle which may never interact with other People of Afrikan Descent also In-The-Life. They are "passing" much as light-skinned people of color have "passed" for white before.

The overwhelming feeling of Afrikan Americans In-the-Life is that after surviving drugs, guns, AIDS, racism, criminal injustice they are abused as causalities of a system that neither understands nor cares. Rather than confront this situation, many avoid being consumed and/or paralyzed by it by going underground, yet remaining closeted destroys self-esteem and augments self-hatred.

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

"Due to these intolerant attitudes some members of the black gay community have chosen to flee to the relative safety of the white gay community... even those brave enough to come out to families in turn are treated as if they have some dark, dirty secret to hide and are told not to embarrass the family." Nathan Kerr (Vol 1, No 4 "Knowledge is Life")

"Black American's view of the gay community is also white-washed. Thereby marginalizing an essential component of its own community. Rendering its sons (daughters), fathers and uncles as outcasts..." - Kerr

The silence will be exhumed, the celebration is near!

The essay "When the Silence Is Exhumed" was included in the Broward County Library's second annual recognition of Gay and Lesbian Pride Month

August 30 — 1996 — September 2

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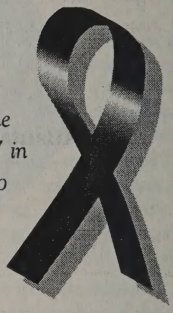
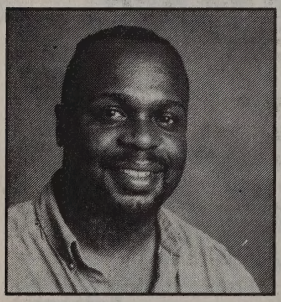
ACTION in JACKSON

The National Task Force for AIDS Prevention (NTFAP) together with an advisory board of black gay community leaders from eighth southern states will be holding a technical assistance and training conference devoted to alerting and sensitizing AIDS service providers to the needs of black gay, bisexual men. The conference will be held April 25-27 in Jackson, MS and is called the UJIMA institute. A day will also be devoted to training and empowerment for black gay and bisexual men. The conference is called the UJIMA Institute taken from the Swahili word for "collective work and responsibility."



The conference is an effort to address the prevention needs of African American gay and bisexual men. Recent reports have shown that infection rates for gay men of color in the southeast are the highest in the nation. This is indicative of the failure to reach this population with the resources and messages geared to ward effective prevention.



Author Badili Jones is outreach coordinator for black gay men at AID Atlanta.

- Address the service gaps between service providers and the black gay population in the South.
- Sensitize health providers to the needs and concerns of black gay men.
- Present culturally appropriate HIV prevention strategies for homosexually active men of African descent.
- Link health care providers to black gay men in their communities.
- Empower black gay men to learn to advocate for themselves, to network with other gay men from the southeast, and to foster productive discussions around developing positive self-concepts regarding issues of race and sexuality.

Black gay, bisexual, and transgendered men, and services providers and representatives from AIDS service organizations, community groups are encouraged to attend. Also anyone providing or intending to provide outreach and HIV prevention services to black gay men should attend.

For more information please contact the NTFAP's Raymond E. Dumas, Sr. at 415-356-8131 or call Badili Jones at 404-885-6800 x271.

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A Black Church Week Of Prayer

Craig Washington

The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS blessed Atlanta with seven days of prayer, education and fellowship. From Sunday through Saturday March 3–9, seven churches/chapels hosted HIV-focused programs providing spiritual sustenance and practical information. Pastors, congregants, service providers, and friends infected and affected convened all over the city to spread healing balm throughout the black community.

This event is actually based upon the original Harlem Week of Prayer established in 1987 by Ms. Pernessa Seal, founder of Balm in Gilead (a technical support agency for churches providing HIV/AIDS services). The CDC (Center for Diseases Control) funded training for the Week's planning committee to implement the programs. This Week was designed to equip the faith community with the means to address the needs of its people.

Healing commenced on Sunday, of course, with the Opening Worship Service at One Accord Community Church of God in Christ (C.O.G.I.C.) in Decatur. With Dr. T.A. Body presiding, the church rocked with a serious praise and worship ministry. Pastor Body's sermon indicted the black Church for failing to welcome all members of the communal family. He mixed humor with passion to illustrate the hypocrisy of church-going Christians and blessed the Week of Prayer as God's commission to the Church. Monday's program held at the Interdenominational Theological Center Chapel in the West End, featured a progressive seminar-fashioned service to educate the pastors. "Homosexuality, AIDS and the Church" and "Can the Church Save Our Children" were among the topics covered.

PHOTO: BY RON SINGLETON

Panelists from local AIDS ministries discussed the joys and challenges of such service. Volunteerism was the theme for Tuesday's service held at the "gay-friendly" Hillside Chapel and Truth Center in the Cascade area. Highlights included a processional by Clark Atlanta University students, speaker Dorothy Triplett, formerly of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

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In Rio Mall
595 Piedmont Ave.,
Atlanta, GA 30308
404-875-9717 fax: 875-1754

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUZETTE CONTRERAS

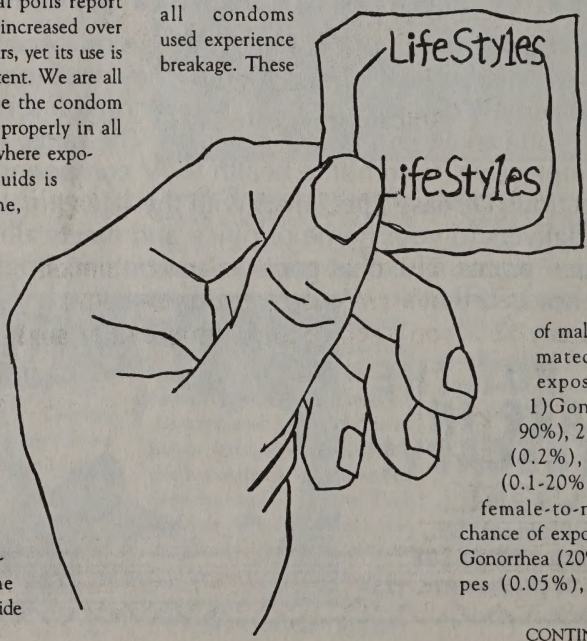
Latex LOVE!

WHAT THE CONDOM CAN AND CAN NOT DO FOR YOU

Leonard Jack, Jr., Ph.D.

Safer sex with the use of a condom without a true understanding of what motivates the act of sex itself is an on-going issue. Specifically, causal sex with the use of the condom is common. Studies are also showing that serial monogamy has increased as well. Overall, national polls report condom use has increased over the past three years, yet its use is not always consistent. We are all challenged to use the condom consistently and properly in all sexual practices where exposure to bodily fluids is possible. No one, regardless of how educated, experienced or healthy you or a potential partner may be, can know enough about safer sex. Condoms are not enough anymore to make anyone feel risk-free. What the condom can provide you is a reduced risk of exposure to sperm and microbes that spread sexually transmitted diseases. If condoms are used consistently and properly your risk is reduced significantly.

It is important to note that national random studies reveal that 2-to-5% of all condoms used experience breakage. These percentages increase with multiple partners and participation in anal sex. Most national data are only limited to heterosexual reporting. According to K.M. Stone in an article entitled, "HIV, STDs and Other Barriers", if condoms are not used consistently and correctly the estimated chance that microbes will be transmitted from one infected partner to another during a single act of intercourse can vary. Examples of male-to-female estimated chance of exposure include: 1)Gonorrhea (50-90%), 2) Genital Herpes (0.2%), and 3) AIDS (0.1-20%). Examples of female-to-male estimated chance of exposure include: 1) Gonorrhea (20%), Genital herpes (0.05%), and 3) AIDS



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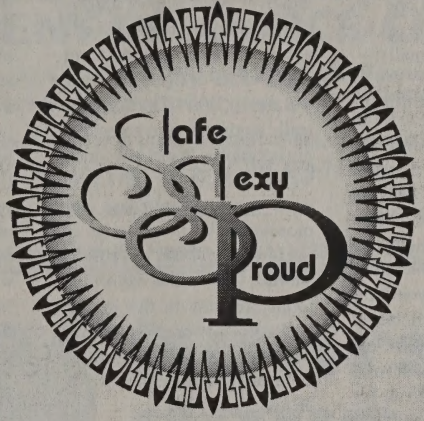
This Is How We Do It . . .

Safely



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Latex Love

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

(0.01-to-10%). Despite figures not being available for male-to-male or female-to-female, it is very important to note that HIV transmission is on the increase again in the gay community. We all should be thankful that the condom serves as a barrier against HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Despite its ability to help prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, no one can use the condom as an excuse for making sex safer emotionally.

There is nothing worse than having what may appear to be an intimate experience with someone, only to learn that it served as another attempt to field an empty void in your life. More often than not, this is an on-going scenario in the lives of many people. Perhaps you have shared conversations with friends who comment on a desire for true intimacy that goes beyond sex. What makes it difficult for individuals to go beyond the physical experience and step into true intimacy? There are multiple postulates that can help explain this on-going phenomenon. Serial episodes of temporary romantic "highs" have replaced a desire to experience true intimacy for many regardless of sexuality. It appears that maintaining a relationship is simply too much work, provoking a pessimistic outlook on longevity. In our community, we have defined our relationships to be successful if they last for six months, nine months and a tremendous success should they survive past one year.

Should you take a poll among your closest friends, you will not learn anything new. Most are single; and desiring some form of intimacy—physical, emotional, intellectual and or spiritual.

Now, you or your friends may have decided that until Mr. or Ms. Right comes along, occasional physical intimacy is expected. Let's be real and acknowledge that the desire to have sex will not diminish. This is particularly evident given recent increased rates of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. However, what is more apparent is that we do not hold each other accountable for making a conscious effort to figure out where we are in life. That is, what really motivates us to accept having occasional sexual encounters, with or without the use of a condom. It appears that momentarily, we dismiss the presence of HIV. This has afforded individuals opportunity to give reasons for this inability to practice power over their lives consistently. These reasons can be linked to one familiar word—FEAR.

It is fear of dealing with who we really are that promotes continuous self-defeating habits that have become so very difficult for many to break. Fear of reconciling our past with mother, father, ex-lovers, current life-experiences makes it easy to dismiss the magnitude of our emptiness. Silent about our fears give them greater power over our lives. Additionally, the inability to do something consistently about our acknowledged fears can be equally debilitating. Consequently, we take on opportunities to project "togetherness", seek others that do the same, and use whatever form of escape necessary to anesthetize our inner most pain. We must become aware of what is presented to us, even from members within our own community that foster an inability to be real with ourselves.

We are consistently presented with images of what being gay should be like—young, hung, hot, muscular, etc—and thus we are presented with superficial images that exploit for profit our sex drives, our low self-esteem, and inability to become unstuck. At some point, many of us will pay the price for avoiding taking the time to take care of ourselves. The price is getting greater for a number of reasons. Many of us are finding that it is important to make self-discovery a life-long project given negative receptivity we may have received from family and friends regarding our sexuality. It is increasingly important that we do not allow our sexuality, that which we want others to accept as be "okay" to became the vehicle through which we seek to temporarily fill that empty feeling. Too many of us have been in denial far too long, whether about practicing unsafe sex or how we participate in safer sex to fill a void in our lives.

In fact, no one can continue to think that having sporadic episodes of sex with a condom is risk free; either physical, emotionally or spiritually. Now is the time to examine your motivations for intimacy. Michelangelo Sinorile, a contributing writer for OUT Magazine wrote, "Intimacy does not mean taking crystal meth and heading to a sex club [or one night stand] to become someone's repository as a way to fill that empty feeling you may have inside. It means treating intimacy like anything you value, using it responsibly and wisely."

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The House of Infiniti!

Torrence Allen

For the past two years the House of Infiniti has been creating havoc on the runway of the New York City ballroom scene.

This fierce group of young Latinos has been dominating such categories as butch face, team runway, butch queen in drag runway, bazaar and runway models effect.

One of the rising stars on the scene is your coverman Rudy Infiniti. Rudy, an aspiring model, moved to New York in 1990 to pursue his career. While waiting for his big break and working odd jobs, Rudy would compete at vogueing balls to hone his skills. He joined the House of Infiniti in 1991. Today he is still one of the house's top members with a number of first place trophies to prove it.

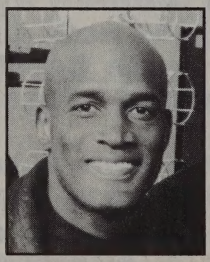
Last fall Rudy and eight of his brothers and sisters participated in the House of Latex Peer Mobilization Intervention: a project aimed at educating young people who participate in the ballroom scene about HIV/AIDS. As a peer educator, Rudy is a model for young people in his community around safer sex and HIV information.

The Latin Ballroom scene, although originated in New York City, has already become a hit among Atlanta's young urban culture.

For more information, contact the House of Latex Project in New York City; c/o GMHC, 129 West 20th Street, NY, NY 10011 or call 212-807-7517.

The Amen Corner

In a powerful production brimming with music, laughter, and spiritual fervor, Artistic Director Kenny Leon will direct Carol Mitchell-Leon, Crystal Fox, and Taurean Blaque in James Baldwin's The Amen Corner, April 3–May 5. One of the country's foremost literary talents and author of "Go Tell it on the Mountain" and "Giovanni's Room," Baldwin wrote The Amen Corner in 1953. Echoing with the sounds of spirituals and jazz, The Amen Corner will feature singers Chandra Currelley, Shelia Ranae Stroud and Bernardine Mitchell.



The Alliance Theatre Company's Kenny Leon

The Amen Corner tells the story of Sister Margaret, a pious storefront preacher of 1950's Harlem, and her son David, the church pianist who is being increasingly drawn to the temptations of "downtown" music. Faced with the fear of losing her son and her church, she confronts the illusions of her piety and the many lies of her life, and in a moment of epiphany, Sister Margaret discovers that the true work of the Lord is in loving all of His children.

Baldwin said he drew on his own experience to "recreate the moments I remember as a boy preacher, to involve the people, to shake them up, and, hopefully, to change them."

For Leon, Baldwin's play is the dramatic tale of people struggling to balance their spiritual needs with their desire to live happily fulfilled, rather than to simply survive. "With a musical tension that parallels the dramatic moments," says Leon, "the Alliance Theatre will be filled with a spirit and magic that will leave audiences feeling uplifted and excited about being alive."

A G M C

15

Join the Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus

for the World Premiere of

Memento Mori: An AIDS Requiem

by James Adler

Saturday & Sunday, April 13th & 14th, 8 pm

The work consists of nine movements using traditional Latin, Hebrew and English texts, personal prose by and about children and adults with AIDS, with selections of Poetry from Quentin Crisp.

In addition to AGMC's over one hundred voices, a full orchestra and guest soloists will perform in Glenn Memorial Auditorium on the Campus of Emory University.

A portion of the proceeds will benefit Project Open Hand and Jerusalem House.

Ticket prices for Memento Mori are $25 and will be available in early March by cash or check at Brushstrokes, Outwrite Books, Poster Hut and The Boy Next Door

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The Week of Prayer

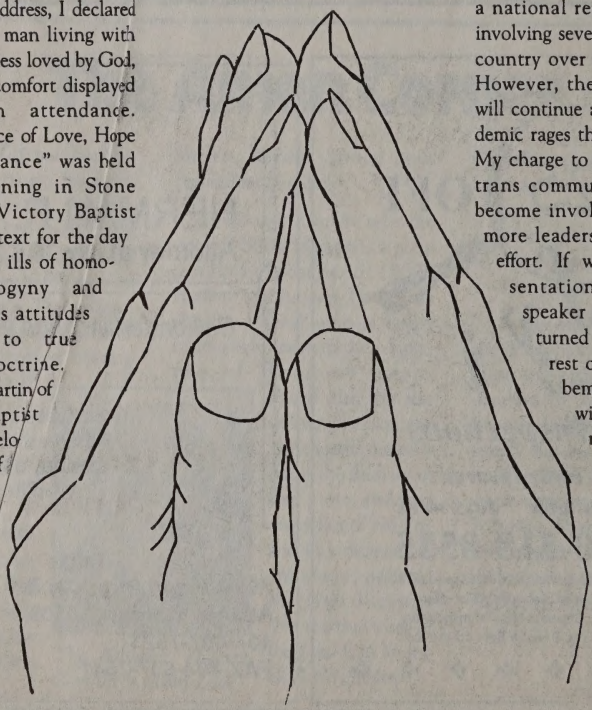
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

CDC, and presentations by local volunteer coordinators from AID Atlanta, A.E.S.M. and Sisterlove. On Wednesday morning, Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church hosted "Positively Living With HIV/AIDS" which provided information pertinent to PWAs such as nutrition tips, drug trial data, women's resources, legal rights, etc. Sevenanda, the Little 5-Points healthfood oasis, had a booth displaying organically grown fruits, beverages and literature. The evening service at Wesley featured a foot-stompin' praise and worship by Prophet Michael Dowdell and a special dance ministry performed by preteens.

During my address, I declared myself as a gay man living with HIV who is no less loved by God, despite the discomfort displayed by some in attendance. "Worship Service of Love, Hope and Remembrance" was held Thursday evening in Stone Mountain at Victory Baptist Church. The text for the day confronted the ills of homophobia, misogyny and AIDSphobia as attitudes antithetical to true Christian doctrine. Pastor Kathi Martin of Emmanuel Baptist Church led an eloquent prayer of remembrance for loved ones who've made their transition. Ironically, Victory Baptist allegedly declined an openly gay man's offer to address the congregation, in favor of an infected woman. Was it plain ole homophobia or excessive caution? Is there a difference?

"Taking Charge of Our Minds, Bodies and Future" focused on reaching our youth and was hosted by Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur. Youth outreach workers engaged the audience in role play exercises demonstrating adults' inability to discuss sexuality openly with their young.

The last day of this momentous Week began early Saturday morning (7 AM!) at the Piedmont Park gazebo. A handful of stalwarts braved the chill-to-the-bone weather to sing and pray for the victory of this "movement." Minister Marvin Quick administered a stirring call for unity among the Week of Prayer planners. Mid-morning service was conducted at Believe & Receive Christian Sabbath Fellowship, home base for Pastor Julia Robinson, Chairperson for the Week of Prayer Planning Committee. Song and dance ministry were offered and Ms. Pernessa Seal herself made a surprise appearance. We returned to Wesley Chapel for the Closing Service.



Proclamations from President Clinton, Mayor Bill Campbell, and Decatur Mayor Elizabeth Wilson were read aloud. Minister Marvin Moss delivered a poignant message recalling the loss of his brother due to AIDS. As Pastor Robinson put it, "This is not the end, this is only the beginning."

The Week of Prayer is part of a national replication project involving several sites across the country over the next 3 years. However, the Week of Prayer will continue as long as the epidemic rages through our village. My charge to the black/gay/les/trans community is that we become involved and take on more leadership roles in this effort. If we had more representation, no openly gay speaker would have been turned away. Let us not rest on our laurels and bemoan the situation without action. We must reclaim God's love as our own as well as remembering that the Creator loves us just us as we are!

PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name:..... Wendy O'Neil

Age:..... 22

Status:..... Involved

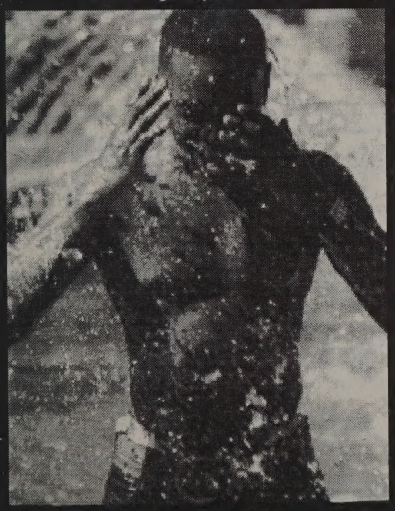
Career: ..... Student of Fine Arts, Spelman College

Hometown:.. New Orleans

Latest Book:. "The Good Negress," by A.J. Vardelle

Former co-chair and one of several founding members of Spelman College's Lesbian/Bisexual Alliance, last summer Wendy participated in the NGLTF First Youth Leadership Training Institute. As a result of her participation, she was featured in a segment of In The Life T.V. Her current project is a monthly story circle because "I need to hear us tell our stories and celebrate myself with my sisters." She graduates in December of '96.

RON SINGLETON
213.937.6538



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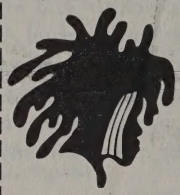

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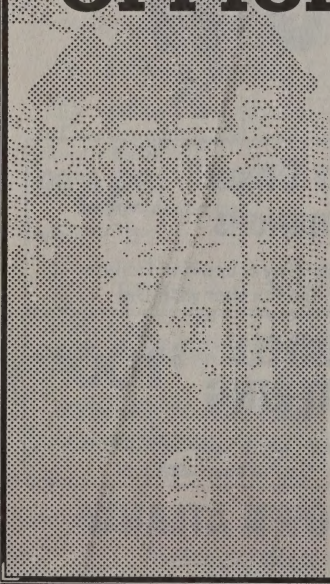

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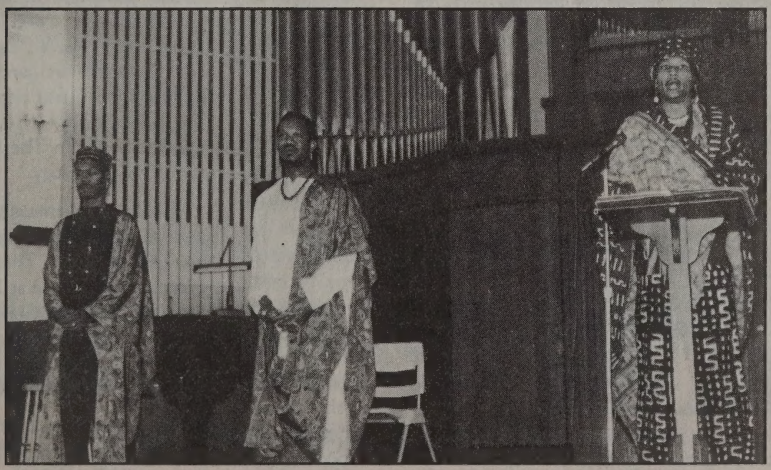
The Atlanta Lambda Center's Black Gay & Lesbian History Celebration at Sister's Chapel, Spelman College

Top (l to r): Pat Hussain, Caron Williams, Tony Daniels, Elias Farajaje-Jones, Aelista Bristow, Joan Garner, Charlene Cothran, Traci Fields. Kneeling (l to r): Mandy Carter, Queen, Mary Ann Adams, Sonya Hemphill.



Tony Daniels leads Adodi Muse in a theatrical performance.

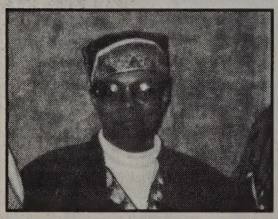
Seventh Annual Bayard Rustin Breakfast

Candace Boyce, Bartholomew T. Casimir, and Pam Scott will be Keynote Speakers

The AIDS Action Committee and the Bayard Rustin Breakfast Committee will host the 7th Annual Bayard Rustin Breakfast, "Reclaiming The Vision of Our Forebears, Continuing The Spiritual Journey," Saturday, April 20, 1996, in Roxbury, Massachusetts.

The Bayard Rustin Breakfast Committee's goal is to keep in the tradition of the previous breakfast speakers like the late literary greats Marlon Riggs and Steven Corbin, and the dancer extraordinaire, Bill T. Jones.

Candace Boyce, is a New York City community activist and founder of African Ancestral Lesbians United for Societal Change (formerly Salsa Soul).



Candace Boyce, founder of African Ancestral Lesbians United for Societal Change.

Recently, Boyce received the Mable Hampton Award from the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum for her outstanding contributions to the lesbian community.

Bartholomew T. Casimir is the Program Director for the Indiana State Department of Health and is the current chair of the National Association of People with AIDS and has been living with HIV since 1993.

Pam Scott is the third speaker and will give the community perspective about HIV/AIDS. Pam is a certified AIDS Educator conducting public speaking for Cambridge Cares About AIDS, and the American Red Cross. Pam is also HIV+.

This year's highlights includes the 1st Bayard Rustin Award for Courage given to an individual who exemplifies the principles of the late great civil rights leader.Imtiyax Hussein is this year's recipient. Mr. Hussein is the founder of Massachusetts Area Asian Lambda Association (MASALA), and the Coordinator of Housing Advocacy at Positive Directions, Boston.

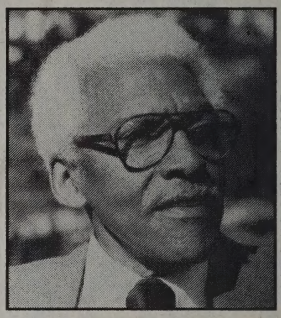


PHOTO: WALTER NAEGLE

Civil Rights and Gay Activist Bayard Rustin.

The chairpeople of this 1996 event are Mia Anderson, Artistic Director of the local Drag Kings, Sluts and Goddesses, and Philip Robinson, poet, anthologized in The Road Before Us 100 Black Gay Poets and In The Life, A Black Gay Anthology.

The breakfast annually brings more than 400 lesbians, gays and bisexuals of color. This year's breakfast will be held at Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries Reception Hall, located at 1010 Harrison Avenue in Roxbury, MA from 10:30 AM to 2:00 PM.

For more information about the breakfast, contact Belynda Dunn at (617) 450-1287.

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Livin' THE SINGLE LIFE

by Steven G. Fullwood

Sistagirls, brothermen, do you fear being alone? Tremble at the thought of being single? Are you in an abusive or difficult relationship? Listen up:

Sit your butt down. Keep it simple.

These words came from Tibet's Honorable Dalai Lama to Iyanla Vanzant. Vanzant, author of the best-selling Acts of Faith, daily meditations for African American folk, shared this and other thoughts while giving the luncheon keynote at a recent women's conference in Washington, D.C. Okay, so the Dalai didn't say "sit your butt down," I added that part.

I've taken a look at what I consider to be the "relationship myth" in America—its form and function, and why so many of us cannot envision ourselves as both single and happy.

The myth, as I see it, takes no prisoners. Nearly everything in our culture places couplings over singleness, marriages over single women and men, two over one. On television talk shows abound with people obsessed with how-to-get-where-to-go-how-to-walk-talk-steal-cheat-lie-crawl-beg for that special someone. Magazines boast ten simple ways to get that special someone to fall in love with you. Radios broadcast soft sensual sounds, some honey-laden voice sister testifies, "I have nothing, nothing, nothing if I don't have you."

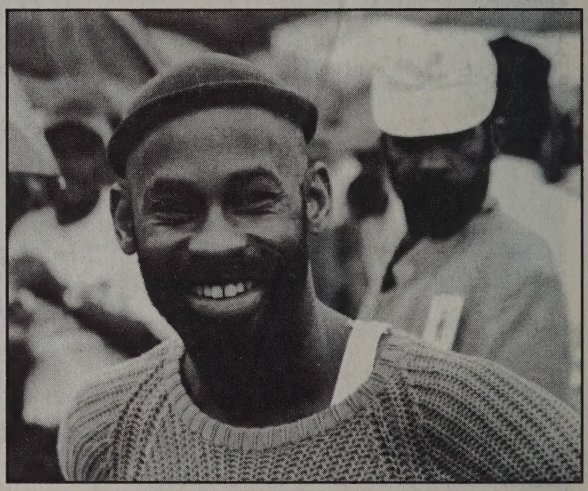

PHOTO: RON SINGLETON PHOTOGRAPHY

Well, now. These types of cultural products can be terribly distracting while you're trying to do the shopping.. You might hum along with Billie Holiday at the market while reaching for the Raisin Bran. You stop, slap your head and wonder, where, oh, where can your loverman or loverwoman be. That's when it hits you. You don't have anyone.

And that's okay. Most of us fail to recognize one simple sobering fact about our lives: we do indeed have someone—ourselves. That is, if we truly want ourselves.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

PROFILE OF A MAN

Name: . . . . . Andréas Goree

Age: 28

Status: . . . . . Single

Career: . . . . . Telecommunications Manager

Hometown: . . St. Louis, MO

Latest Book: . "And This Too Shall Pass," by E. Lynn Harris

As a member of the advisory board of In The Life, Inc. (Atlanta's Black Lesbian/Gay Pride Committee), Andréas is busy helping to build the structure of the organization. He dedicates his work to the surviving partners and families of those who have lost loved ones to HIV/AIDS.

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Living the Single Life

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

Understand what you're up against. One would be pressed to find expressions of self-love in this society not linked to an eventual coupling or a new pair of Reebok. The message is: Love yourself to make yourself suitable for someone else. Unconditional self-love is a hard attribute to find in someone these days. Most folk can't see self-love as a perpetual liberating state of being. After all, if you loved yourself unconditionally, who'd need designer clothing or Maybelline? Surely these products, and other such products' value would be profoundly different; maybe they'd cease to exist.

But let's go slow. Don't want no brains to explode.

While it may hold that you are a product of a coupling (immaculate conceptions aside) you can live a healthy life as a single person. Really, I swear. You just have to get used to the fact that what will come to you, will come. In the time being, you should be having the time of your life. Life is good, I tell you. You can learn alot about yourself when your alone. Be thankful you're not in a debilitating or an abusive relationship. You can do whatever you choose.

Reflect, sisters and brothers, reflect. It may be difficult to go to that space alone initially, but it's the only way to mature. After awhile, you can participate more fully in loving someone, because you've placed love for yourself first. Surround yourself with friends who challenge you to be all that you can be and more. Now and then, you can luxuriate in a union, be in a coupling that doesn't corrode your sense of being, or compromise who you are. You'll quickly realize being in a couple isn't a prerequisite for being human, being happy or healthy. No man or woman can rescue you, because, well, you're doing just fine.

A burst of light.

You might say, well, what about single bars, single functions and the like, but y'all know the aim: a coupling. Hers and hers, his and his and his and hers towels.

The way this culture shoves the relationship myth down our throats is terribly disenabling for your average Joe or Joanne. If you're single, the implication is "you're available: ever waiting with chocolates and flowers, in your best shirt of dress. You're never at your best, you know, because even the hint of a potential suitor makes our body quake with yearning. Got your mouth all tasted up for some good, good loving. You ooze desperation.

Face it, you're hideous. You prop yourself up, all doused in perfume or aftershave lotion, only to be picked up or over, most likely by some moron, that you, in your right mind, wouldn't go near unless there's a gun poking you in the back.

I speak from experience, from nights on the prowl for unyielding, soft brown flesh; fantasies, if you will, never to appear at all, only to exist in my busy little head. Which is, in all practicality, where most fantasies should reside. But that's fodder for another column, so I'll stop there.

Anyway, I was left with getting acquainted with myself, which to my surprise, was quite all right. Difficult at first, but tremendously satisfying in a way no one else could satisfy me. While going through this process, I thought to myself, Am I worthless if no one tells me otherwise? The answer knocked me out. Nothing knocks you out like the truth; or rather, a perceived truth. Surely, this can't be it, I thought, the end, that's all folks. It was then I began to investigate ways I could affirm myself, be good to myself in ways I hadn't previously considered. In a relatively short time, my health improved, my spiritual life flourished and my career blossomed. Child, I looked at my feet and they were new.

Now don't get me wrong. I've got nothing against a good dicking and all, but when it comes at the expense of my self-esteem, alarms go off, I come to my senses and come correct. I change my behavior and the offensive party is given the boot. Being in a relationship should free you up, not chain you down. If you give love, there's no reason not to expect it returned tenfold. If your love isn't returned, move on, baby. When you love yourself, you're never on your last, never feeling worthless or insignificant. You'll demand the best for and from yourself. It's what you deserve, remember that.

Being single is not the period in between your relationships; its quite the opposite. You're the only one who can see to it that your needs are met. And to do it properly, you'll have to give some serious thought to what those needs are, alone, being still.

Face it, you'll always have yourself.

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WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

"In Flight"

In Flight Women's Amateur Athletic Union Basketball Team is one of the newest teams in the country on the semi-pro level and based in Washington, D.C.

In Flight has now expanded to a nationally ranked team since placing runner-up in the 1995 National Amateur Athletic Union Championship held at Catholic University, Washington D.C. Women's teams from all over the country participate in this tournament each year.

The primary purpose of the team's existence is to promote women's basketball, to provide women with a forum to exhibit their talents and take them to a women's professional league to begin on the East Coast.

In Flight is a memorial team dedicated to a woman who coached Baltimore inner-city women. Myra Harrision, better known as "Fuzzy," now deceased, guided women in organized sports. She stood for discipline and leadership.

The team will participate in the AAU National, April 19–21 at Catholic University, the HoopHeads/Queen Latifah Pro Classic April 26–28 at Howard University, and HoopHeads again in Los Angeles July 6th weekend.

Queen Latifah (center), sponsor of HoopHeads Women's Basketball Pro Classic, congratulates her team after a game.

In conjunction with Sophisticated Ladies Productions, In Flight will be holding a series of fundraisers for new team uniforms, travel expenses and various other needs. The first event will be held at Circle Bar on April 20 in Washington, D.C. from 10 PM–3 AM and feature D.J. India.

The second fundraiser is a very special event honoring Queen Latifah, her team, and HoopHeads for their hard work and dedication to the support of women's basketball over the years. This event is an exclusive VIP party; you must be 25 years-old to attend. It will be held April 26 at the Foxtrappe, located at 700 Water St., S.W. in Washington, D.C. For an invitation, contact Ms. Vicki of Sophisticated Ladies at (301) 231-4028. The third fundraising event will be held Saturday evening after the Pro Classic on April 27 from 10 PM–3 AM at Jenny's Show Lounge located in Waterside Mall on M Street. S.W. Five levels of secured underground parking are available for your safety.

Plans are now underway for an Olympic event in Atlanta that will benefit African American AIDS organizations. The one night gala will attract more than 300 athletes and their partners. The event is by invitation only. Tickets are $100. Corporate sponsors are lining up including Venus Magazine and one of the nation's largest beer brewers. For additional information, contact Venus at (404) 622-8069.

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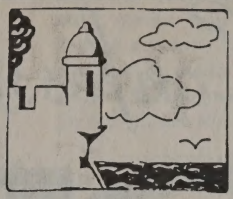

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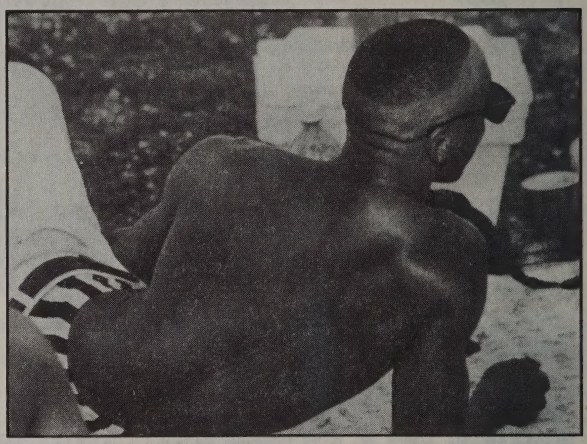
Confessions Of An OREO

For many weeks I have been in a constant state of awareness that I am an oreo, an uncomfortable situation in which to find oneself.

I was labeled this by a friend after revealing to him my opinion on the O.J. Simpson verdict. I will spare you my opinion; but, the fact that, because of it, I was labeled an oreo should be evidence as to what it is.

This was not the first time I had been labeled as such, placed into that category of African-Americans who are in some obscure way...white-like. Having been called bougie, uppity, sidity, I was not overly shocked by my friends statement. I was however troubled, because I was once again reminded of the way in which we as African-American gay and lesbian people, place ourselves into limiting, unfortunate categories.

I did not take my friend's comment to heart—not too much. I only saw it as an example of the lingering divisions in the African-American comm. I was, however, deeply concerned that being called an oreo, like so many other labels, would only reinforce my disgust with labels



and their place in African-American community.

I asked other friends, gay and straight—all , "Would you consider me an oreo?" All of them replied, "No," and wondered why I was giving this fleeting comment so much attention. One acquaintance with a biting sense of humor, replied, "James, I have always just considered you a strong Black ...woman." This gave me something else to think about, but I still wasn't satisfied. An oreo...me?

I was bothered that one of my gay brothers would see me in this light, and more disturbed by the fact that I was actually taking time out of my life to even think about the whole matter.

Deciding that the answer was somewhere hidden in my short history on the blue planet, I thought...I grew up in a family, like most others—dysfunctional. My mother was a teacher; my father was trained as an engineer and spent a great deal of his life battling substance abuse. We were middle class. We lived in a small town in East Tennessee. We talked slow, traveled often. I lived the quintessential, suburban, Southern experience. But,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39

this could describe any number of people.

I began to assess my lifestyle. I do not party...much. I enjoy reading and painting. I speak little, like jazz. I went to college—not an historically Black institution of higher learning, but one, gasp, that during the Civil War, served as a hospital for Confederate soldiers. But don' tell anybody. I cannot convincingly say "w'zup" and I try my best to use who and whom in the correct manner. I am not stylish—because I can't afford to be. I am not a Republican. But this is neither here nor there Black or white.

With "OREO... OREO... OREO...," pulsing at the back of my mind, I even began to monitor my actions. Should I really order this cranberry sweater from J. Crew? I hope no one saw me buying that Cecilia Bartoli CD. Should I really disclose that I enjoyed Darieck Scott's Traitor to the Race better than James Earl Hardy's B-Boy Blues? If someone sees me out with this fair-skinned man will they smirk and say, "I knew he always had it in him."

I am simply the product of my environment. I am no more or less Black or gay because of it.

One must only look through the personal ads in any urban periodical to see the proliferation of labels and categories in which we, as African-American gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered persons, place ourselves. I am becoming accustomed to labels: femme, fat, chubby, lipstick lesbian, college boy, flaming queen, diesel dyke; moreover, if one slips and makes the statement that he or she will be satisfied, in a relationship, with a partner who is merely devoted...well, no one believes you?

"Girl, what if he's rough trade?" And. "He doesn't make enough money." And "She thinks she's the shit." And.

On numerous occasions, I have felt that I would never meet anyone because most men can't get beyond my belly. Fat. Oreo. Femme. College Boy. Flaming Queen. Chubby. All labels, all painfully divisive...all serving as fences. I will stay in here. You stay out there. They are all dogs. They think they're better. I'll put up with his shit because I can't do any better. I am this; you are that.

The sadness lies in that we label others and then label ourselves, or accept the labels assigned to us by others. Fences. The same actions we decry the white lesbian and gay community for practicing are almost identical to the ones we practice on our gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered brother and sisters of color.

I must say that I simply... am. My worth and place in our community should not be decided on the fact that I like Othello better than Ma Rainey's Black Bottom or enjoy equally the works of Essex Hemphill and Walt Whitman.

One must realize that racists and homophobes, if struck with the notion to harm a gay person of color, are not going to pull out charts and decide, based on an individual's personality, appearance and demeanor, if he or she if fully Black or gay.

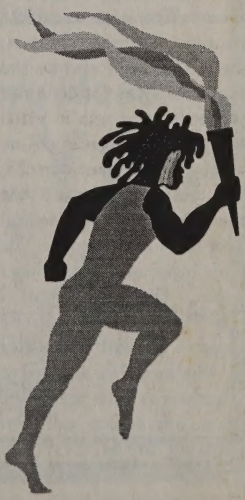
They will not go through our CD collections and compare the number of Broadway Musical Cast Recordings to acid jazz selections. They will not worry about whether he is a plumber or she is a doctor. They do not care about paychecks. They will see us as African-American and gay and will seek to do us harm.

The persons who deny us our rights, beat us down and even kill us do not give a damn about this system of caste we have created within our community. To them we simply are Black and gay. In even their eyes we are a community.

We are individuals, yet part of a whole.

If those who seek to harm us see no divisions in our community—why must we? Is it such a big step for us to move forward an begin to see ourselves as one?

An oreo...me? Humph!



The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

Life of Audre Lorde chronicled: The life and legacy of Audre Lorde, the late feminist poet and human rights activist, will be on display as a photo-documentary exhibition co-sponsored by Gerber/Hart Library and Archives and the University of Illinois at Chicago. The exhibit, called "Transcending Silence: The Life and Poetic Legacy of Audre Lorde," will run through April 5th at the Chicago Circle Center's A. Montgomery Ward Gallery. For more information contact Randy Snyder at (312) 338-5482.

Olympic City To Host Road Race. The site of 1996 Olympic Games events, Athens, GA, will also be the site of the AIDS Coalition of Northeast Georgia's Fifth Annual Show of Feet 5K Run, Walk, and Roll on May 25, 1996. The race begins at 8 AM at the Athens Regional Medical Center on Prince Avenue. The $10 pre registration fee includes a T-shirt. The late registration fee is $12. Medals will be awarded to top shirt you've ever seen. Medals will be awarded to top finishers in each age group. For more information, call Kerri Edwards at (706) 542-2437.

Cases of AIDS reported each year in Georgia are increasing fastest among women and African Americans, and also increasing faster in small towns and rural areas than in urban centers, according to Kathleen E. Toomey, MD., MPH, state epidemiologist and director of the Epidemiology and Prevention Branch of the Georgia Dept. of Human Resources Division of Public Health.

The report also shows that African Americans were 68% of all new cases reported in 1994, up from 57% in 1990. Much of this increase took place outside of metropolitan Atlanta. "This information is helping us direct our prevention and treatment programs to areas with the greatest need", says Toomey. "We are in the seconds year of a community planning, partnership with grassroots health activists, people who are HIV positive, and health professional from all over Georgia."

The World Is Watching! Help ensure a fair and accurate image of our community. GLAAD-Atlanta will host a Media Breakfast on May 9 to introduce local gay and lesbian community leaders and activists to the national and international media to help ensure fair coverage during the Olympics and Summer of 1996. Media professionals and reporters from national and global T.V., radio, magazines and newspapers, wire services will have the opportunity to explore issues of importance to the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered communities. Come to Mary Mac's Tearoom May 9th from 7:30–10:00 AM. For information, call 404-876-1398 or e-mail GLAAD ATL@aol.com.

North Carolina Mobilization '96 is a grassroots campaign led by African American lesbian activist Mandy Carter. We are dedicated to the certainty that Jesse Helms can be defeated! Our People of Color Committee is led by an African American bi woman. The group urges gay North Carolinians across the U.S. to "Come Back Home!" for NC Pride '96, June 7–9 in Winston Salem. African American LesBiGays will have a strong, visible presence at NC Pride this year and we're going to have FUN! while brainstorming how to defeat Helms this year! Call (919) 828-3311 for more information.

Lesbian Photo Reinstalled at Women's Rights Park. A

photo of a women holding a sign that reads "BLACK, LESBIAN, FEMINIST" which was removed from a display at Women's Rights National Historical Park on December 8, 1995, was reinstalled to it's original location on February 12, 1996 The photo which had been temporarily placed in a "closet," than moved to a less visible location in the museum, was part of a lobby display depicting women of all backgrounds, politics and agendas. Superintendent Joanne Hanley was responsible for removing the photo in what lesbians in the area are calling a homophobic act. The photo is the work of well-known photographer Bettye Lane, and is a straightforward documentary image. This was the only photo that had been removed.

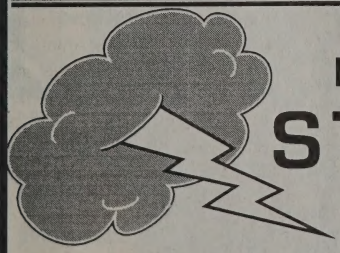
A Coke and A Smile. The Coca-Cola Company, one of Atlanta's largest employers and a highly visible international. presence in this Olympic year, recently extended it non-discrimination policy to include "sexual orientation." This significant step forward should be rewarded by a letter of thanks to the Chairman and CEO of Coca-Cola, Roberto Goizueta. In your response, encourage to Mr. Goizueta to take the next step and extend health and other benefits to domestic partners of employees. Write to Mr. Goizueta at P.O. Drawer 1734, Atlanta, GA, 30301 ; to respond via the World Wide Web, go to http://www.coca-cola.com/co/equeries.html.

AIDS Education/Services for Minorities (AESM), a certified nonprofit community based IDS Service Organization (ASO) sponsored an Art Auction/ Banquet. Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney and Congressman John Lewis were guest speakers. All proceeds benefited AESM programs including the AESM House.

National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum to Honor Phil Wilson and Ruth Waters for "106 Years of Activism" The National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum will honor its founders, Phil Wilson and Ruth Waters at a gala event in Los Angeles on April 28. Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan and U.S. Congresswoman Maxine Waters will serve as Honorary Co-Chairs.

The event, titled "106 Years of Activism," honors Phil Wilson, who will retire this month as Director of Public Policy for AIDS Project LA and Ruth Waters, a widely known activist in the lesbian and gay community. Wilson celebrates his 40th birthday and Waters her 66th birthday this year.

The evening will include a silent auction, dinner and tribute at the Universal City Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles. For information call the Forum office in LA at (213) 964-7820 or in Washington at (202)736-3729.



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Venus™ MAGAZINE

Blues in the Night

Jomandi Productions announces the Broadway hit of the late 70's, "Blues in the Night," as its final offering for the 17th Anniversary Mainstage Season running April 26–May 19, at the 14th Street Playhouse.

"Blues in the Night" uses the great blues and jazz songs of the 1920's and 30's to explore the lives of three women and a saloon singer in a cheap Chicago hotel during the course of a long memory-filled evening. The songs celebrate a great period and style of American music and explore the influences and roots of jazz as it grew from the Blues.

It once was said, "Blues is to jazz what yeast is to bread." The blues melodies of Bessie Smith, Jimmy Cox, Alberta Hunter and others are mixed and contrasted with the songs of Harold Arlen, Andy Razaf, Johnny Mercer and other greats of the jazz world to paint the full spectrum of the great musical form, starring Theresa Hightower.

"(T)he great blues and jazz songs of the 1920's and 30's (are used) to explore the lives of three women and a saloon singer in a cheap Chicago hotel during the course of a long memory-filled evening."

For groups and information, call (404) 876-6346. For advance tickets, call Ticketmaster Arts Hotline at (404) 817-8700. The 14th Street Box Office opens April 15th, call (404) 733-4750. Tickets are $12–$25 and shows run Wednesday through Saturday, 8 PM, and Sundays at 3 PM.

Khamit Kinks
by Annu

Good News! Khamit Kinks is here to service your locks no matter what stage they're in.

For beginning locks we offer palm rolling or the coil method. If you've already started your locks, we can help you maintain them. We offer the basics as well as specialty treatments including: shampoo, conditioning, hot oil, henna, scalp treatments, manicuring and clipping, joining weak locks, herbal rinses, etc.

All these services are offered to promote the health of your hair first and foremost. We receive much satisfaction servicing African people's hair in its natural state, "kinky."

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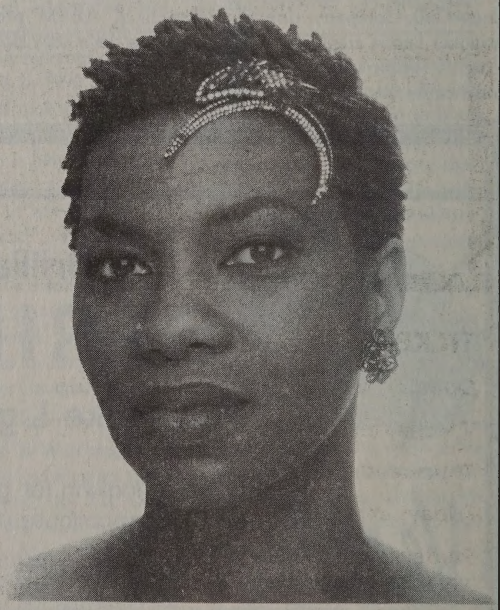

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April 26
thru
May 19, 1996

Blues in the Night

14th Street Playhouse • Shows 8PM Wed–Sat, 3 PM Sun.

Conceived and Originally Directed By
Sheldon Epps
Original Vocal Arr. & Musical Direction by
Chapman Roberts
Orchestration & Addt'l Vocal Arr. by
Sy Johnson

Chicago in the late 1930's
Three women and a saloon singer in a "cheap hotel."
Their Lives...
Their memories...
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Opening Night and Reception	$25
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Fridays and Saturdays	$18
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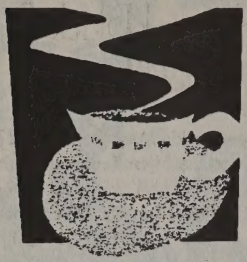
ARTS LINE

Tickets for all main stage performances are available through TicketMaster Arts Hotline:

404/817-8700



CONFERENCES

UJIMA

An institute for HIV prevention among gay and bisexual men of African Descent in the South April 25-27, 1996 Harvey Hotel Jackson, MS. for info cantact Raymond Dumas, Sr. (415) 356-8136

Keep Your Head To the Sky:

Queers of Color Coming Together, April 19, 1996, Ohio State Univerdity, Columbus. Contact: Diversity of Ohio, (614) 486-5664

XI International Conference on AIDS

Vancouver, Britiish Columbia, Canada, July 7-12, 1996. 12,000 to 15,000 expected to participate. Volunteer Hotline (604) 683-7781. For all other info call (604) 668-3225, Email-aids96@hivnet.ubc.ca

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4th International Bisexual Conference

Berlin Germany. May 24–27, 1996. (619) 542-0088

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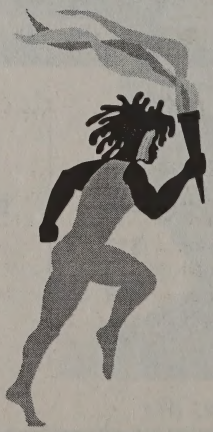

FESTIVALS

Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Arts Festival

Don't miss the hottest artists in Downtown Decatur April 11–14, 1996. Events includ Gallery Opening & Reception; Dianné Aldrich Company Striip; a presentation of *The Vicar's Wife* by David Mowers; *Sensuality* by Sonya Hemphill; *Late Night with David Lesbian*; Poetry Reading; and an Artist Market. Festival Passes: $20 available at Brushtrokes, Outwrite Books, Charis Books and More (cash or check only). Call the Info Line at 404/874-8710 for more information.

Washington D.C.'s

BLACK LESBIAN & GAY PRIDE WEEKEND

May 24-26, Friday May 24 - Black Pride Kickoff reception; Saturday May 25 Cultural Arts Festival, Memorial Vigil, Boat Ride; Sunday May 26 Main Event outdoor Festival; Package deal $65.00. Black Lesbian and Gay Pride Development, Inc. (202)722-4780, Email blgpd@aol.com.

FUNDRAISERS

Join Venus & Friends for a meet

Cynthia McKinney Bar•B•Q Fundraiser

Help send Cynthia back to D.C. as our Congresswoman! Minimum $25 contribution. Sunday April 14 from 5–8 PM at the Venus Office (616 Ormewood Avenue—call 404/622-8069 for directions/reservations) Delicious food and a chance to affect the future of the country and your community—what else do you have to do on a Sunday afternoon? **BE THERE!**

ENVISION EQUALITY

at the 1996 HRC Dinner/Dance at the Hyatt Regency Ballroom in Atlanta on Saturday, May 4, 1996. Enjoy cocktails, dinner and dancing while you meet friends. Bid on items at our Silent Auction. Special rates arranged with Hyatt Regency Atlanta; call 404-577-1234 for information. Honorary Chairperson Coretta Scott King. Featuring Dan Butler of *Frasier*, Chastity Bono, Sean Sasser and Elizabeth Birch, the Executive Director of HRC. For tickets or more information, call 770-840-6969.

MEETINGS

ALL PEOPLE OF COLOR GROUPS

Please meet at Kalo's Coffeehouse, 1248 Clairmont Road, Sat., April 13 at 2 PM to discuss plans for a multi-cultural float in the Pride Parade.

PARTIES

The Interstate Champagne Charity Ball

Pre-Ball Party, Fri, April 12 10-3, casual attire. Champagne Charity Ball Sat, April 13 10-3, semi-formal. Days Inn, 2700 NY Ave NE, Wash., D.C., $40.00, advance sales only. Contact Babi Moore (301) 596-6167.

Annual Black & Gold Dance

New York's Marc Ballroom 27 Union Sq. West (between 15th & 17th Sts) NY, NY. Sat., April 27, 1996, 10-3, $35.00 contact Bess Knowlings (718) 992-9073

Atlanta - Brothers of 30 Something Special presents

Elements of Style

Pre-Easter Bunny Hop, Saturday April 6, 1996 10-3, $10.00 performances by Adode Muse and Enigma. Club Ultimate 4640 Washington Rd. College Park (404)305-9366

Aries Celebration Dance

Sisters of 30 Something Atlanta, Sat. April 13, 1996, 10-3 a.m, $7.00.

RETREATS

Awakening Brotherhood to our Rhythm & Culture

Black Gay Men's Retreat April 5-7, 19996, Boston, Mass. Sponsored by Brother II Brother. Contact Craig Cobb (617) 267-0849 ext 220

OUT & about

Writer/activist Sabrina Soujourner with award recipient Jeannett Williams of D.C.'s Black Lesbian Support Group.

National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Award recipients (l to r) Vallerie Wagner, Ta'Shia Asanti, Candace Boyce and Steve Wakefield.

The Atlanta contingent gathered for a caucas in Dallas during the National Black Gay and Leadership Conference.

Queen, co-chair of In The Life, Inc., and poet extraordinaire, greeted her royal subjects at a gala banquet in in Dallas.

ORGANIZATIONS

Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

Abundant Grace Community Church—743 Virginia Avenue. Sun. Worship 7:30 PM (404) 815-0036.

ADODI New York—A self-supporting organization of gay and bisexual men of African Heritage. 432 West 43rd St, Ste. 8045, N.Y., N.Y. 10036

African Ancestral Lesbian United for Societal Changed (Formerly Salsa Soul)—(212) 620-7310. Candice.

African American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA)—(404) 908-7371.

AIDS Education Services for Minorities (AESM)—P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, GA 30337. (404) 753-2900 or (404) 743-7733.

AIDS Prevention Education for Asians and Pacific Islanders—culturally and lingustically appropriate services. Contact Jennifer Kim (770) 936-0969 em: KCSC1996@aol.com

AIDS Response Knoxville—Suite 411, 109 Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919, (615) 450-2437.

AIDS Services in Asian Communities, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 212, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1938

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church—575 Boulevard. Sunday, 7 PM, evenings, 8:30 PM, (404) 622-1154.

American Cancer Society—Lesbian and Gay Cancer Support Groups. (404) 841-0550. Meets 3rd Thursday of each month.

Atlanta Lambda Center, Inc.—P.O. Box 15180, Atlanta, GA 30333. (404) 662-9010.

A. Lorde Collective—African-American Lesbians Organized to Renew Dignity and Empowerment. Hotline: (313) 862-3396.

AYA Institute—dedicated to the education and mental health of our community. P.O. Box 3824, Jersey City, N.J. 07303-3824 or (201) 451-3412.

Bisexual Resource Line—A combined voicemail project of several Bay Area Bi Groups. (415) 703-7977.

Bisexual Womyn of Colour—BIWOC since 1991. P.O. Box 020136, Brooklyn, NY 11202-136. (212) 479-7886. Donna Reddy, pres.

Black & White Men Together—POB 1334, Atl., GA 30301-1334. (404) 892-BWMT.

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum—1219 S. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 964-7820. FAX (213) 964-7830.

Black Gay Pride Atlanta—P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, GA 30312. (404) 872-1097.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. (BLGP Inc.)—Box 7184, Washington, DC. 20024.

Black Women's Network—Box 5, 136 Kingsland Height St., London, England, UK/E8/2NS

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)—Meets every Friday at 8 PM at the Amassi Center. 3419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA. For more info, call Ms. Clydis (510) 649-0536.

BLUeS—Bronx Lesbians United in Sisterhood, Event Organization. (212) 330-9196

Boyz of Distinction—P.O. Box 78091, Atl., GA 30532.

Brothers Back-2-Back, Inc.—An African American HIV/AIDS Organization, P.O. Box 11366, Atlanta, GA 30310. Voice: (404) 593-5805.

Chicago Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays—(312) 871-2117.

Cinnamon Productions—Womyn of Color event organizers. (718) 994-0028.

Creation Woman—poets/artists & affiliates meet last Sun. each month. (310) 422-1970.

D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men and Bisexuals—(202) 388-8078.

Dyfferent Gyrl Production—P.O. Box 13346, Atlanta, GA 30324. (404) 908-5340.

Fe*mail—a D.C. publication for Lesbians of Color. P.O. Box 75392, Washington, DC 20013. (202) 546-7040

Friend of Friends—(301) 735-5023; P.O. Box 77075, Washington, D.C. 20013

GALAEI (for Latino gay men), 1233 Locust St., 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 985-3382

Gay and Out Productions—P.O. Box 111, Clarkston, GA 30021-0111. (404) 299-7809

Gay Black Female (GBF)—6312 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 114, Hollywood, CA 90028. (310) 288-6315.

Gay/Lesbian Latino/a Community Organization Out Reach, Inc.—(404) 346-3922 or (800) 441-2437.

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teacher's Network—P.O. Box 5512, Atlanta, Georgia 31107. (404) 872-4320.

Georgia Equality Project—GEP, P.O. Box 78351, Atl, GA 30357-2351. (404) 662-4030

GLAAD—Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. (404) 873-2002.

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)—2103 N. Decatur Rd., Suite 190, Decatur, GA 30033. PH: (404) 377-4258. EM: info@gabc.gaypride.com

Home Free Ministry—P.O. Box 688, Atl., GA 30301. (404) 818-2033.

Hospitality Atlanta—For Women of Color (404) 523-0228.

HRC—Human Rights Campaign. (770) 840-6969.

International Black Writers & Artists—meet 2nd Sunday Bladwin Hills/Crenshaw (213) 964-3721.

Las Buenas Amigas—(212) 868-7816. Carmen, The Gay & Lesbian Center, 208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011.

Latinos En Accion—Youth support group. P.O. Box 15388, Atlanta, GA 30325. (404) 621-5743. Yolanda Leeky, (404) 753-2840.

Lesbians Latinos en Nuestro Ambiente—(707) 292-7705.

LLEGO, National Latino/a Lesbian & Gay Organization—P.O. Box 44483, Wash., DC. 20026.

Malebox—Meeting black men. P.O. Box 75392, Wash., D.C. 20013.

Minority AIDS Project of Philly and Vicinity, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 218, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1937

MOCAA (Men of Color Against AIDS)—Boston, MA. (617) 442-3800

National Assoc. of Black & White Men Together—1747 Connecticut Ave., Washington, DC. 20020. (202) 462-3599.

National Black Women's Health Project—1237 Gordon, Street S.W., Atlanta, GA (404) 758-9590.

North Carolina Mobilization '96—P.O. Box 28718, Raleigh, NC 28718. (918) 828-3311

our cousin's house—An African American AIDS Organization. P.O. Box 10709, Atlanta, GA 30310. (404) 758-0397.

ONYX/Chicago—Leather Social Club for Men of Color and their friends. 1340 W. Irving Park Road, Suite 188, Chicago IL 60613.

Positive Black Lesbians United (PBLU)—P.O. Box 655, Avondale Estates, GA 30002. (404) 250-7950.

Pink Triangle Productions—Gay Female Entertainment Party Source. (770) 723-7292.

Project Open Hand, Atlanta—(404) 525-4620. Home delivered meals for people with AIDS related illness.

Project AZUKA, Inc.—An AIDS organization for women. P.O. Box 9173, Savannah, GA 31402. (912) 233-6733.

Pyramid Productions—Cultural Shows & Dances. (718) 622-5093.

Q-GLU—Queens Gays & Lesbians United. (718) 639-4951.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church—Box 50047, Atl., GA 30302. (404) 388-4624.

SAGE—Senior Action in a Gay Environment. (212) 741-2247.

SALGA—South Asian Lesbian Gay Association; P.O. Box 50, Cooper Station, NY, NY 10276-0050; (212) 294-2550; Email: salganyc@dorsai.org

Second Sunday Discussion Group—POB 310, Atlanta, GA 30301. (404) 325-7321.

Shades of Brown—Professional Womyn/Men of Color. (212) 439-1024.

Shades of Ebony Connections—For Women of Color, Dallas, (214) 570-5795.

Sisters of 30 Something Special—(404) 350-9758.

Sister Love, Inc.—(404) 753-7733, (404) 753-1500.

Sophisticated Ladies—Lesbian Group for Mature Women of Color. (202) 788-1866.

Southern Conference of Black Gay Men—P.O. Box 212421, Columbia S.C. 29221

Spelman College Lesbian Bi-Sexual Alliance—710 Peachtree St., Suite 126, Atlanta, GA 30308. (404) 908-5368.

Stonewall Bar Association—Professional organization for attorneys, legal assistants and other related professions. P.O. Box 7708, Atl, GA 30357-0708. (770) 621-4663.

The ADODE MUSE—a black gay male literary group; 348 Berean Ave. S.E., Atlanta, Ga 30312. (404) 521-2515.

The COLOURS Organization, Inc.—1108 Locust St., 1st Floor, Phila. PA 19107. Education, prevention and support programs for sexual minority people of color. For more information, please contact (215) 627-6233.

The Gay and Lesbian Center—208 W. 13th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011.

The Men's Gathering—P.O. Box 190869, Dallas, Texas 75219-0869,(214) 521-5342, ext. 876. Meeting times: 4th Friday of each month, 7 pm

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TRIKONE—An Asian gay and lesbian organization. (404) 892-0475 or (404) 373-8915 trikat!@mindspring.com

ULOAH (United Lesbians of African Heritage)—1626 N. Wilcox Ave., #190, L.A., CA 90028. (213) 960-5051.

Unity, Inc. (for African American gay men), 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 214, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1876

Viva!—Lesbian and Gay Latino Arts Organization. (310) 301-8035.

Woman's Monthly—Periodical calendar for woman's community. 1213 Morningside Dr., Silver Springs, MD 20904

Women in the Life—D.C.'s Black Lesbian party hotline. (202) 667-8078.

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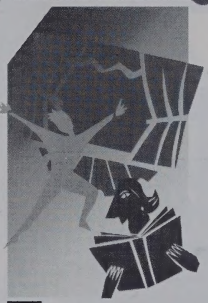

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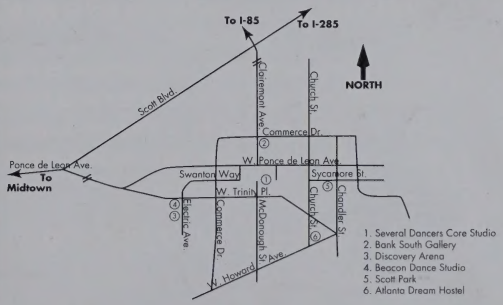

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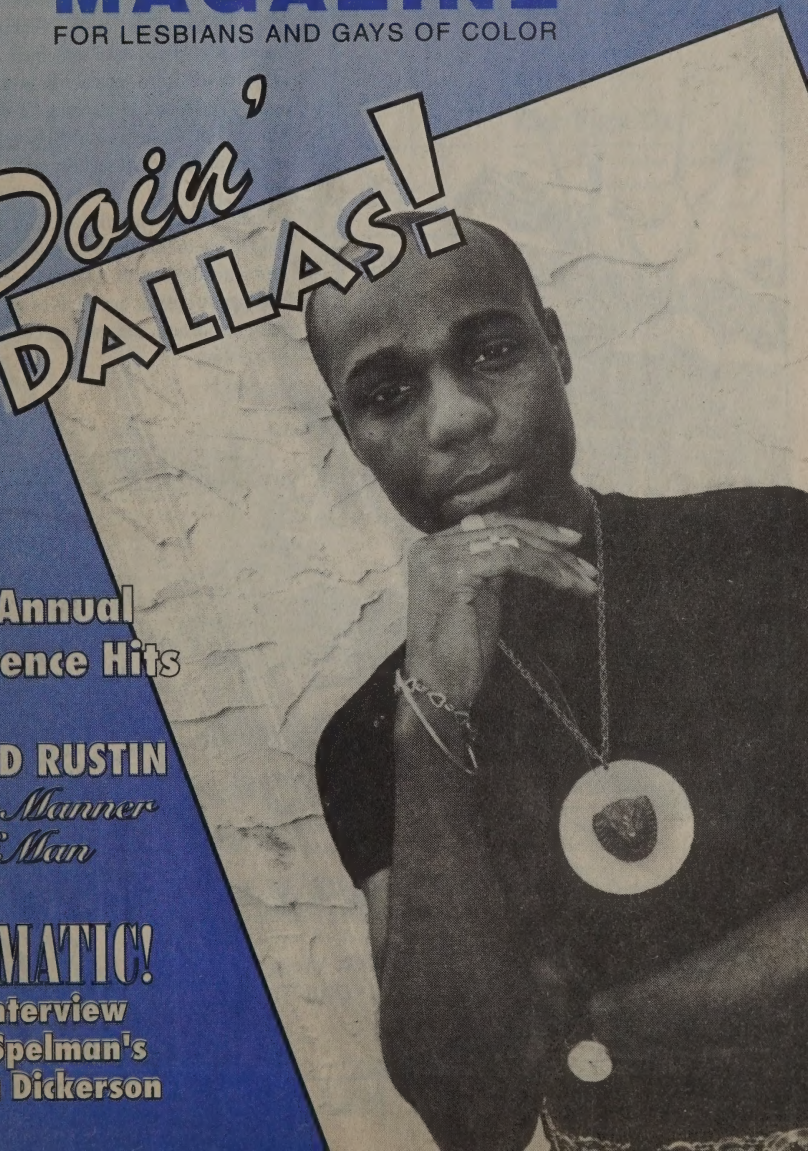

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What Manner of Man

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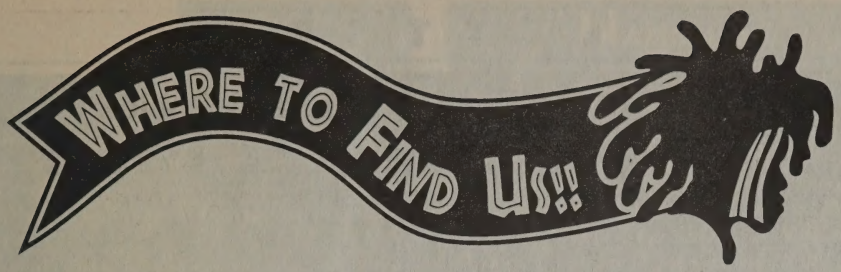

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LETTERS

DEAR EDITOR,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and membership of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum and the AIDS Prevention Team, we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Venus Magazine on its one year anniversary. For the past year, Venus Magazine has provided bridges of information across which Lesbian and Gay Men of African descent have connected and learned about one another and the challenges we face.

Venus Magazine has informed and provoked as well as entertained, and we look forward to our continuing relationship as Black Lesbian and Gay Men prepare to enter the 21st Century.

Continued success to you and Venus Magazine!

Yours in the Struggle,

Vallerie D. Wagner
Gregory J. May

DEAR EDITOR,

I want to take this time to thank you for pulling together such an important and long overdue tribute to Bayard Rustin during this past celebration march for the late Rev. Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.

The strength of the rally for me was the willingness and consciousness of those Black lesbian and gay men who came, not only to pay homage to a very dear and great man, Bayard Rustin, but to march in the streets of Atlanta, Georgia, proclaiming our blackness, gayness and our power of unity.

Louise Covington
Atlanta, Ga.

DEAR EDITOR,

I can't thank you enough for coming up with this ultra fabulous brainstorm of an idea to honor Bayard Rustin. I never felt so involved with the march before like this last one. This has truly been the best MLK holiday for me yet!

Marlin Knapp,
Atlanta, Ga

DEAR EDITOR:

First and foremost I need to express my awe and amazement in your publication, for Venus Magazine is a true asset to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered community here in Atlanta.

As a gay white male, of European heritage, I personally feel no connection to any group outside of the gay community that one might call a "culture". For me leads to the feeling our community is my culture. While I myself draw great strength from the leaders of the gay rights movement, both past and present. I in no way ignore other civil rights leaders.

About the Martin Luther King March, I personally am very excited with the idea of gay and lesbian inclusion in this important event. For many members of our community, the idea of a separate spot in the march for the "queer" community is important, but not vital. I agree with and support the idea that African-American people demand a place at the family table. For many people of color, they are African-American first, and gay, lesbian, or bisexual second. Although this view may not sit well with many members of the community, I still feel it is a valid view. The invisibility of gay and lesbian people of color is a myth that needs to be broken.

Owen Dean Edwards,
Jonesboro, Ga.

From The Editor

As we celebrate Black History Month in February and Women's History Month in March, do consider how important it is to document ourselves as Gays and Lesbians of Color. This doesn't mean that you have to be a writer, poet or photographer.

It simply means saving and taking special care of those things which serve to notify and inform us.

For example, flyers and invitations to monthly or annual events are wonderful items for you or your organization to place in a scrapbook. These items, along with snap shots and news clippings will help remind us of special times when we're old (and we will get old if we keep living).

More importantly, a younger generation, sure to be more proud and out than some of us, will be educated and empowered (or at least tickled) by the history we leave behind. Besides, 50 years from now we wouldn't want "the children" to think that they are the first to ever party at Red Top Mountain or to organize a Black Gay and Lesbian History Program on campus, or to visit a local Black church as an OUT organization.

Who knows, maybe we're not the first to do any of these things either. As long as we proclaim our place in history, we sure enough won't be the last!

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February–March 1996
Vol. 2., No. 3

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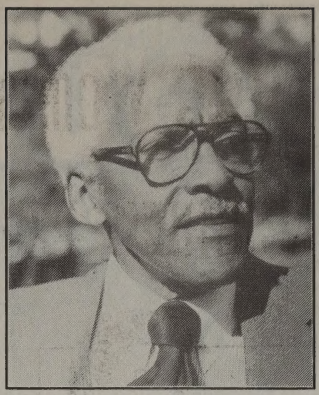

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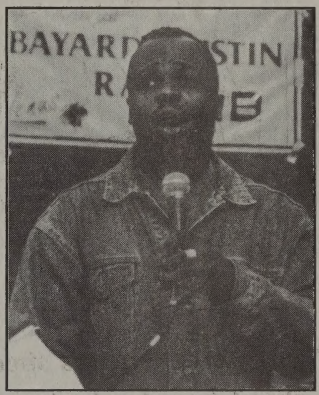
Bayard Rustin



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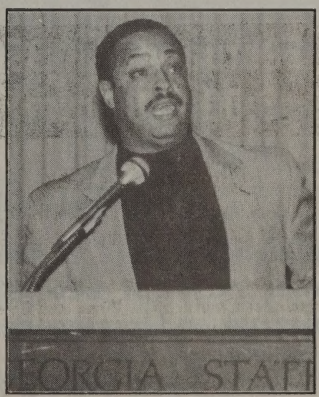
Black History



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WHAT *manner of* MAN ?

A Bayard Rustin Story

by Charlene Cothran

During the Martin Luther King National Holiday weekend my partner and I walked hand-in-hand past the dais table of the King Center's 1996 Salute to Greatness Dinner. Seated with their respective spouses and other guests were Jesse Jackson, John Johnson of Johnson Publishing; former ambassador Andrew Young; Sister-Dr. Johnetta Cole, president of Spelman College; and the recipient of the Salute to Greatness Award, Leron Bennett, Jr., executive editor of Ebony magazine. As we approached our table I politely helped Marian with her chair then took my seat. I can't ever remember being more proud to be OUT.

I hope that Mr. Bennett won't mind that I've borrowed the title of his King biography "What Manner of Man" to describe another great man upon whose shoulders Dr. King was able to stand. This great man is BAYARD RUSTIN.

Credited as the architect of the 1963 March on Washington, Rustin worked for over 20 years before that historic event to end racial discrimination in the armed forces.

Bayard Rustin and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the home of Dr. Arthur C. Logan. Courtesy of the Bayard Rustin Fund, Inc.

In 1941, Rustin, under the guidance of A. Phillip Randolph worked to organize a march on Washington by 100,000 black people. Just six days before the threatened march, President Roosevelt issued an executive order prohibiting discrimination in the defense industry and in government, and created the Fair Employment Practice Commission to enforce the order. Blacks having won this important victory, then began to see the great potential offered by such nonviolent action.

In 1947, while riding the bus in a small southern town, Rustin refused to take a seat in the back of the bus. In the same year, long

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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Bayard Rustin and A. Philip Randolph in 1971

before the emergence of a gay pride movement, Rustin felt strongly that it was necessary for his own personal growth to come out of the closet as a gay man.

He declared " The only way I could be a free, whole person was to face the shit."

Rustin reflected during a 1987 *Village Voice* article about specific incidents when his being gay became an issue for other civil rights leaders during the 1960's.

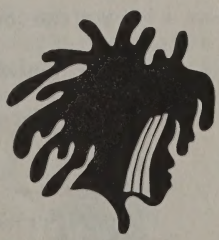
"Actually, [A. Philip] Randolph asked me to organize the marches. I decided that Mr. Randolph ought to get Dr. King to join us, on the simple principle that the other civil rights leaders would then feel that they had to join in. Dr. King was at the press conference announcing the marches, and then left for Brazil. Later he called me from Brazil very,very agitated indeed, and said that on second thought maybe we ought not to proceed with the marches. At that point, he did not tell me why, straightforwardly. I went to see Mr. Randolph, and asked him to give me permission to say to Dr. King that he was very sorry, but that he and others were going to go ahead anyhow. I thought that Dr. King would have no choice but to stay in.

"I called Martin back and told him this, whereupon he told me the whole story. A woman who was well known in the movement had called him and said that [Congressman Adam Clayton] Powell was going to call a press conference and implicate me and Dr. King in some sort of liaison if Dr. King did not call off the marches. Now, obviously this is a case where Powell had been promised something by the Democratic Party if he'd get rid of me. Dr. King asked for a delay. I said we couldn't afford to delay. In the end, he decided to go ahead and Powell did not go to the press. This is the kind of thing that Adam did."

"Dr. King came from a very protected background. I don't think he'd ever known a gay person in his life. I think he had no real sympathy or understanding. I think he wanted very much to. But I think he was largely guided by two facts. One was that already people were whispering about him. And I think his attitude was, look, I've got enough of my own problems. I really don't want to be burdened with additional ones. Secondly, he was surrounded by people who, for their own reasons, wanted to get rid of me—Andrew Young in particular, and Jesse Jackson. Definitely not because I was gay but because we didn't agree on some issues—whether or not King should go north to Chicago, and also the Poor People's Campaign."

Bayard Rustin continued his fight for blacks for many years and went on to serve as director of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute in New York City. He also later lent his voice to the Gay movement addressing many groups including the sixth anniversary of Black and White Men Together in Boston in 1986.

Village Voice, *June, 1987, "Time on Two Crosses," an interview with Bayard Rustin by George Chauncey, Jr. and Lisa Kennedy.*



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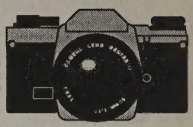

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BLACK GAY PRIDE Atlanta

The vision became a reality in Atlanta, Labor Day weekend 1995. Black Gay Pride Atlanta, (BGPA), was born into a large southern Family of gorgeous black gay men and lovely lesbian sisters. Traditionally, we visit other Family in Washington D.C. on Memorial Day and in Los Angeles during the fourth of July weekend. This year, however, the greatest Family Reunion of all will take place after the Olympics in Atlanta, August 30-September 2,1996.

An enthusiastic and experienced advisory board has already begun to lay the ground work for the organization and festivities. Co-chairs Warren Williams and Marcia (Queen) Bailey McComb,both newcomers to Atlanta, bring excitement and fresh ideas from their experiences with other Black Gay Pride organizations.

Warren volunteered his services to the BLGPD,Inc. committee in D.C. for three consecutive years as a member of the Public Relations committee, and chair for the Development and Finance committee.

Queen brings a wealth of experience from Baltimore's Black Gay Pride Events and currently serves as community liaison for the Atlanta Gay Pride committee. Queen feels that as African-American gays and lesbians we must begin to build coalition from within. " It somehow seems that each black gay or lesbian organization here in Atlanta is content to work alone with it's own handful of supporters. My goal is to secure a commitment from each organization to send at least one delegate to the planning table."

"We urge you to join us lend your talent and gifts, to see the vision of unity."

Warren also believes in community interaction. "Black Gay Pride Atlanta will not only be an event to come together and have fun, but to also use this opportunity to learn more about each other as African-American lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and trans-gendered people." Warren continues, "We urge you to join us, lend your talent and gifts, to see the vision of unity." He says, "we need individuals who can lay out plans and execute them as well as those who can fold letters and lick stamps; all hands and mind are valued."

Anyone interested in making a voluntary contribution to the organization please contact Black Gay Pride Atlanta's Pride Line at 404-872-6410.

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at karats rhythm and blues

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Venus Staff Writers/Advisors: (l to r) Douglas Jones, Craig Washington, Roderick Linzie, Ph.D., Charlene Cothran, Leonard Jack, Jr., Ph.D., Badili Jones and Tony Daniels.

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Standing: (l to r) Sandy Lark, Mandy Carter, Gail Booker, Joan Garner, Joy Barnes, Nancy Mitchell, Dorinda Henry, Doris Harris. Sitting: (l to r) June Washington, Marian Farrah, Charlene Cothran.

PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name: . . . . . Dorinda G. Henry

Age: 30

Status: . . . . . In a Relationship

Career: . . . . . Student, Religious and Theological; Board, NAACP Seattle Chapter

Hometown: . . . Lubbock, Texas

Latest Book: . . "Born of a Woman," by Bishop John Shelby Spong

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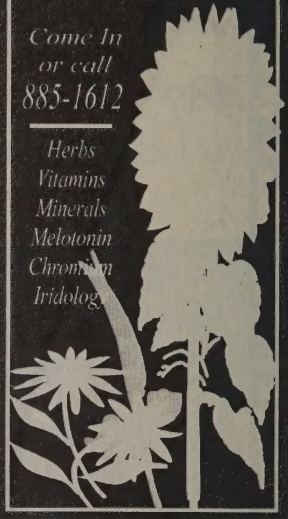

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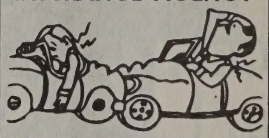

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Dramatic!

An Interview with Glenda Dickerson

By Eve Wernicky

Protagonist (Glenda) enters stage left and gracefully glides toward center stage. Spotlight fades in slowly as she gazes a little above eye level into the audience. Her hands clasped together.

(Boldly) You don't have to walk that road—I have already walked that road for you. (Applause)

That road; the road less traveled by; is the road that Glenda Dickerson has helped pave. In a world where the reality of the "black female director" is virtually non-existent to the masses—save for choreographer/director Debbie Allen—Dickerson is one of a handful of directors that according to her peers and the critics, has mastered the craft.

Dickerson, 51, Professor and Chair of Drama and Dance at Spelman College, has directed the likes of Angela Bassett, Lynn Whitfield, Cicely Tyson, and — ironically—Allen herself.

PHOTO: JENA P. JONES

Among her most popular work is the Emmy award-winning "Wine in the Wilderness" and "For My People" which earned a Peabody Award.

Dickerson studied drama at Howard University and later earned a master's degree from Adelphi University.

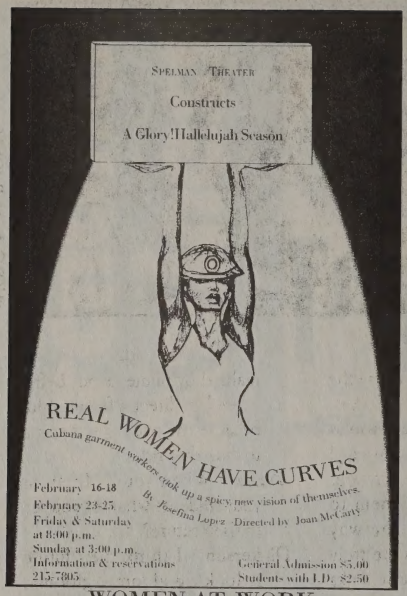
After becoming disillusioned with the "cattle call" auditioning process actors go through, she formed the New York based theater company TOBA (Tough on Black Actors) in the 1960's.

From then until now, she has traveled all over and racked up her repertoire, having directed more than 50 dramatic and musical productions on and off-Broadway.

This season at Spelman College. Dickerson has put together an homage to working women called, "Women at Work: Spelman Theater Constructs a Glory Hallelujah Season."

The next play in the season is Josefina Lopez's "Real Women Have Curves," which explores the lives of five overweight African-Cuban women working in a steamy, family-run seamstress shop in Miami. It opens at Spelman College on February 16. Call (404)215-7805 for more information.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19



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Professor, Dept. of Communication
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Venus: Why did you pick this play for the series?

Dickerson: Well, the women start out feeling very bad about themselves because they are poor, fat, and alien. The protagonist, a writer, goes through a journey of discovery because she looks down on these women but later finds the strength and courage these women have.

Also, March is Women's Month and we will be screening films and have three-in residence artists creating works that will be shown. Among these artists is renowned choreographer and performer Blondell Cummings.

Venus: You had such an impressive career as a director. Why teach?

Dickerson: Teaching is important because it is your immortality. The only way to be immortal is to pass on what we know; all of our knowledge; to expose them to some of the pain we went through so they could have a voice.

Venus: What is the most difficult thing about directing?

Dickerson: The most difficult thing is to try and fill the psychological vacuum of the characters. It is difficult to try to avoid a play being flat, being about people saying words.

Venus: What is the most rewarding thing?

Dickerson: The process. I love rehearsals more than the performances themselves. The process is magical, it is like creating a tasty stew.

Venus: Are you very hands-on or do you pull back and allow all sorts of improvisation?

Dickerson: I think I'm both very hands-on and very open to improvisation. I allow the actors to make their own discovery. I allow them to use their own physical comfort. I can't tell them, 'Scratch your head here." I ask them to react to the lines the way they would if they were truly saying them, or else it looks and sounds fake.

PHOTO: JENA P. JONES

The Spelman Drama Actors

Venus: You certainly have directed some heavy-hitters. Who has been the most joyful actor to direct?

Dickerson: I think Angela Bassett, because she was very young, valid, and rooted. even now, with all that has happened to her, she remains very real, very regular.

Venus: You were once an actor yourself. Why did you feel it was important to direct and what is your take on why there are so few black female directors?

Dickerson: Directors are in a power position. Actors are like slaves on the auction block. I encourage all my students to become directors. Because the film industry is defined by white gay males, throwing women of color in the mix is seen as threatening. Look at the biggest films out there; action films. These are the adolescent fantasies realized by name, is not being offered to direct a feature film because the pack is not going to take that risk.

Venus: When you look out at your students what do you see in their future?

Dickerson: I think their future is looking gloomy, gloomy, gloomy. We are living in a generation that is drastically conservative—to the point that the National Endowment of the Arts is at the point of demise. However, I'm optimistic that more independent film productions and theater groups will continue to grow.

Venus: In preparing for this interview, a common word that came up next to your name was "diva." What constitutes a diva in your view?

Dickerson: I think a diva is grand in the old sense of the word. I think a diva is dramatic in presentation. Women who are the center of their own discourse, who are not afraid to let the chips fall where they may.

Venus: So are you a diva?

Dickerson; Of course. (Fade to black)

Eve Wernicky is a freelance writer who contributes regularly to Venus

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PROFILE OF A MAN

Name: . . . . . Warren M. Williams

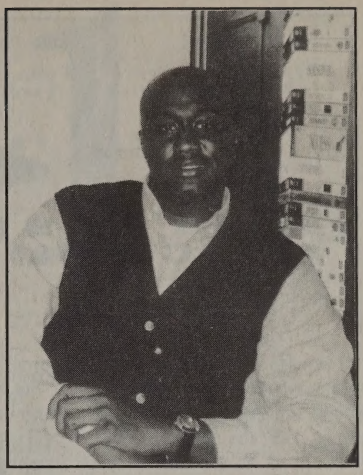
Age: 28

Status: . . . . . Single

Career: . . . . . Software Support Analyst

Hometown: . . Washington, D.C.

Latest Book: . "The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother"



Warren relocated to Atlanta last year and is currently co-chair of Black Gay Pride Atlanta '96. He is an enthusiastic leader who has served on D.C.'s BGP committee as chair of Development and Finance for three consecutive years.

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The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

Beginning February 15, the **American Cancer Society** will offer a support group for gays and lesbians with cancer and another support group for their significant others and families. The groups will meet the third Thursday of each month at 6PM in the Society's headquarters. Call 404/841-0550 for more information.

The Human Rights Campaign will hold its annual dinner on May 4, 1996 at the Atlanta Regency Hyatt's newly expanded ballroom. The dinner theme is "Envision Equality" in keeping with the mission of HRC which is to expand the organization's base and position itself as much more than a fund. HRC has a new look and logo—an equal sign symbolizing its mission to "envision an America where lesbian and gay people are ensured of their basic rights—and can be open, honest and safe at home, at work, and in the community.

Conference Call. . . "Keep Your Head To The Sky: Queers Of Color Coming Together" is the theme of a conference, called "to develop strategies and combine our strength as Communities of Color to combat hate, discrimination, and oppression." The event unfolds April 19, 1996, at Ohio State University, Columbus. Organizers are seeking presentation/ workshop proposals AND "technoqueers to spread news of the conference everywhere." Contact: Diversity of Ohio, tel. 614-486-5664, e-mail sharifax@aol.com

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Did You Tape Wigwood? ACT UP/Atlanta seeks videotape and photos of Wigwoods past. Share your wiggy memories with us! Call ACT UP @ 404-874-6782 or write to 828 W. Peachtree Street, N.W. Suite 206A, Atlanta, GEORGIA 30308-1146. Wigwood '96 will be on Saturday, May 18.

What!! No Red Top for '96? Red Top Mountain—Memorial Day Weekend an outdoor event on Lake Alatoona near Atlanta has been attended by as many as 2,000 African American Lesbians & their friends over the past 5 years. The special celebration, sponsored by Hospitality Atlanta, has been diverted from the facility this year. Hospitality Atlanta advised (by the Park Service) that the size of the group, although festive and violence free, has put a traffic burden on the Park and its staff. Alternate events are now being planned. Watch for announcements of activities for that weekend in Venus and in the forthcoming mailings. Remember, the Spirit never dies. Come join us in Atlanta, May 24-27.

The Second Annual Georgia Ride for a Cure will be held Sept. 6-8, 1996, from Augusta, Georgia to Atlanta. For information on riding, volunteering, donating time/money/ equipment/supplies, or corporate sponsorships; call ACT UP @ 404-874-6782 or write to 828 W. Peachtree Street, N.W. Suite 206A, Atlanta, GEORGIA 30308-1146. Fight AIDS With Bikes! Venus will sponsor one man or women of color. Any interested rider should contact the Venus office for details, (404) 622-8069.

"Turning The Tide: Journal of Anti-Racist Activism, Research & Education" is a unique tabloid, particularly "useful to activists and organizers." Contact: "Turning The Tide," P.A.R.T., P.O. Box 1990, Burbank, CA 91507, tel. 310-288-5003, e-mail mnovickttt@igc.apc.org. Editor Michael Novick reports the "Turning The Tide," is also "now available on-line through the Prison Activist Resource Center web site and gopher address on PeaceNet."

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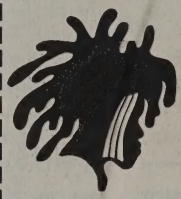

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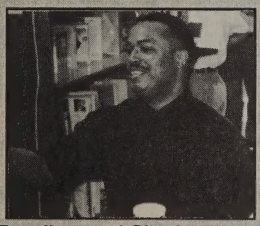

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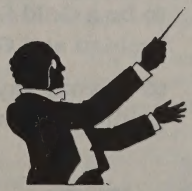

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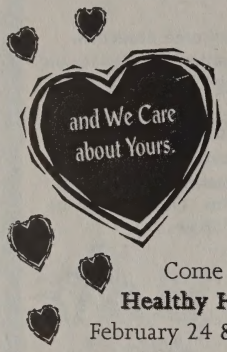

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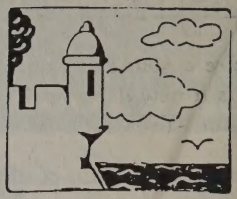

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Coming Out Was Tough To Do

By Stephanie D. Ellis

Publicly acknowledging your homosexuality in a society filled with racism, gay bashing, and sexual discrimination is a difficult choice for many men and women across the country.

Stacey Nelson, 23, a junior at Clark Atlanta University, says revealing her sexual preference to her immediate family was one of the most agonizing and controversial decisions she has ever made. Nelson was "in the closet" for ten years; those years filled with secrecy, lies, and shame. "Those years of keeping my sexuality away from my parents forced me to live in two different worlds. One world, the life my family wanted me to live; the husband, the two kids, the dog, and the white picket fence. The other world, my world with my female spiritual soulmate."

Nelson, born and reared in Jackson, Mississippi, recalls one of her greatest fears in announcing her homosexuality was her fear of rejection. "I remember as a teenager, my father ridiculed and condemned all homosexuals to hell." She says after telling her parents of her own sexual tendencies, the family rejected her as a devil worshiper, and banished her from her home of 20 years.

Nelson realizes the consequences of her decision to confront her homosexuality and strongly supports her decision. "I remember as a teenager my father said gays went against everything God intended life to be. His favorite phrase was, 'Those damn gays and faggots are going straight to hell.' Listening to my father's reaction to homosexuality I vowed never to share my sexuality with my family. But as the years passed, I had to open myself to my dearest family."

Reflecting on her childhood, Nelson explained that her life was filled with domestic violence and alcoholism. As a child, Nelson recalled many nights witnessing her father physically beat her mom. "My father would leave home a gentle, caring man; and would return home five hours later a violent, angry monster." As a result, she associated men with violence and anger. Alcoholism remained a constant in the Nelson household. As she viewed her father's daily use of alcohol to solve his problems, she too began to use alcohol as a problem solver.

Although Nelson likes women, she admits her feelings are more emotional than sexual. "In everyday situations, women seem to take their time to make you feel comfortable, where as men only care about their own personal feelings."

As a member of the National Association of Gay Rights, and a member of the Lesbian Society located at Spelman College, Nelson's main objective is working toward ending discrimination and negative gay stereotypes. Nelson also receives weekly counseling for her childhood experiences with domestic violence.

Stephanie D. Ellis is a journalism major at Clark Atlanta University

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PROFILE OF A QUEEN

Name:..... Whitney Farris-Lee

Age:..... 35

Status:..... Unattached

Hometown:..... Augusta, GA

Former Titles: .. Too Numerous To Mention!

Whitney joined the Venus staff as a sales executive when the magazine was still a concept. She is chiefly responsible for many of our early, long-term advertisers. Whitney currently resides in Saint Louis, Missouri, where she is working on her autobiography, entitled "I, Diana." We miss you, Girl!

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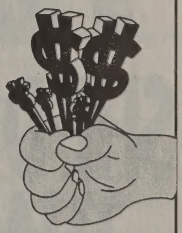

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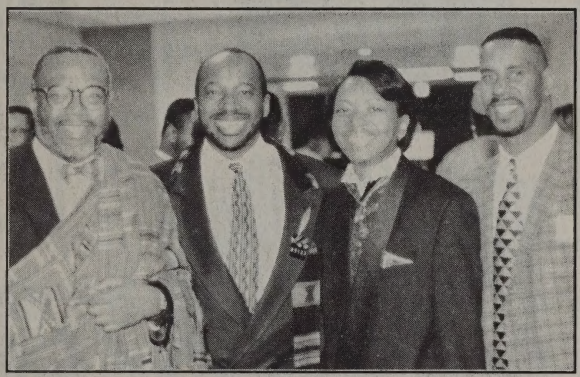
AIDS RESEARCH

Is Dallas READY?

Ninth Annual Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Conference

By Linus Lynell

When asked about the benefit of the conference being held in Dallas, Texas, Alpha Thomas, Coordinator of Umoja Hermanas replied "I feel the conference is definitely a wake-up call for the black gay, lesbian, bisexual & transgendered community in this city, and time the conference has been held this far south of the Mason-Dixie line." J. Gray feels that economics is the greatest benefit for conference participants. "Dallas is centrally-located as far as travel is concerned. Hotels here want our business and are eager to please our community." Echoing that sentiment, Amazing Grace Foundation founder R.J. Allen feels that Dallas, Texas offers "true southern hospitality."



PHOTOGRAPH BY RON SINGLETON

(l to r) Ken Reeves, Co-Chairs Gregory May and Valerie Wagner, and Dwayne Breeman at the Los Angeles '95 National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum Summit.

In light of the ultra-conservative right-wing movement that most citizens in this country are feeling (directly or indirectly), community members will readily admit that they are uncertain how the City of Dallas will react to the conference being held here. Many, however, are optimistic that there won't be any direct opposition. A. Thomas isn't expecting the worst because "most African-American churches won't be aware that the conference is being held here. For those who are aware, they will be so caught up in their own mundane worlds that they won't care, or won't have the courage to be involved in this issue." Thomas adds, "I feel our churches are different from Anglo churches in that our churches are too afraid to make any type of public statement on any issue. Protests, in my opinion, are not likely. If they haven't done it against white gays and lesbians, I doubt if they will be able to muster up enough courage to do it against members of their own community."

In keeping with the Conference theme "As The Struggle Continues," N. Rawls feels "the first step in the struggle will be for us to accept ourselves for who we are. Once that's done on an individual basis, half the battle is won. We must also learn to accept other individuals in our community for who they are. Only then can we come together as a community, as one voice."

Specialized

By James Darren Clay

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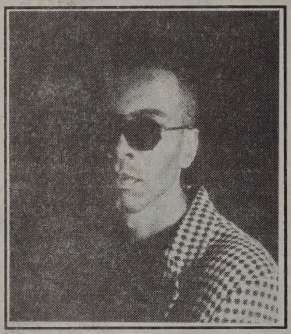

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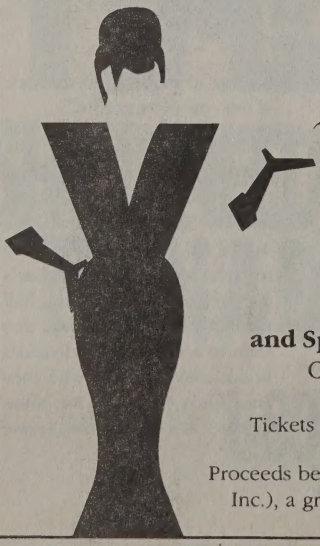

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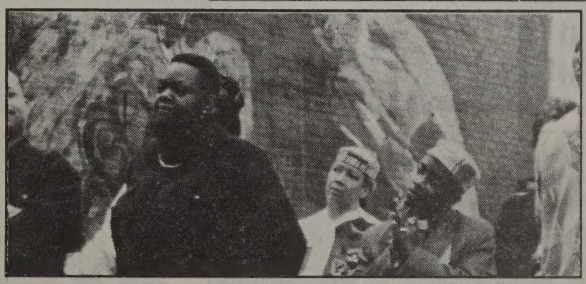
Making Black *History*

I'm not certain how the rainbow became the symbol of the larger gay and lesbian community but I have been led to believe that it symbolizes the diversity of the lesbian/bi/gay and transgendered community. In the lesbian/bi/gay and trans contingent in the Martin Luther King day celebration, rainbow flags were in abundance. I personally look for the day when the reality that the rainbow symbolized materializes.

African-American gays and lesbians are all too invisible in the gay and lesbian movement. We are often locked out of the leadership of the community due to the lack of dollars and power along with racism in the gay and lesbian community.

Marcia Bailey-McComb at the Bayard Rustin Pre-March Rally.

I've marched in several King day marches over the years and this year was markedly different. Out, proud, African-American gays and lesbians stood in the front of the contingent. When the black dignitaries, civil rights veterans, and unionists walked by they didn't see a throng of white faces they saw their sons and daughters, sisters and brothers; they saw a part of their community that is often invisible and silent. For the first time I saw African-American gays and lesbians stand on the side lines cheering and waving their support to us. Some even spontaneously stepped off the curb to join us.



Before taking part in the march we took the opportunity to remember Bayard Rustin. Bayard Rustin was a vital part of the African-American struggle for freedom and liberation. The lesson that we as black gays and lesbians must draw from that is that he did this in the 50's and 60's as an out black gay man. He did not have to go through the schizophrenia of what comes first being black or being gay.

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KING MARCH 1996

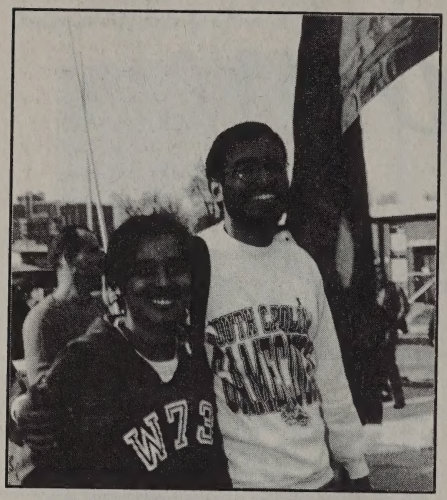
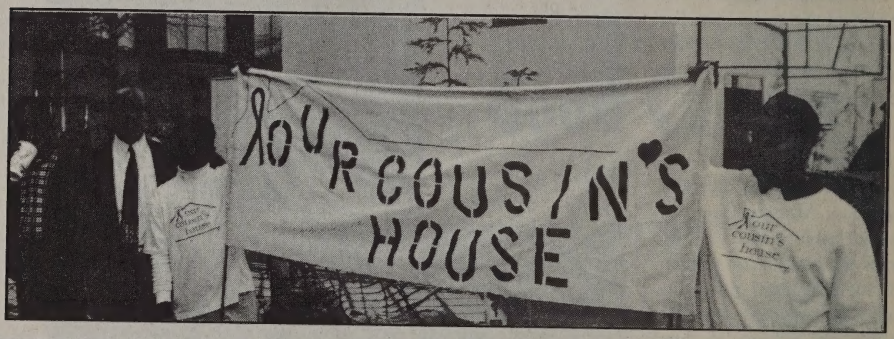


PHOTO: E. BENNETT/SOUTHERN VOICE

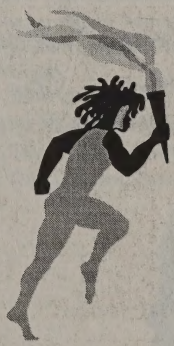


Reverend S.F. Mahee, of Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church greets rally participants.

How far have we come in 1996? Unfortunately, not far. We as African-American gays and lesbians all too often believe that we have to live as divided persons. The gay and lesbian community at-large calls on us to make up the numbers and to provide a black face at times in the struggle. They tell us that we should only be concerned about gay liberation and to forget the issues that we face as African-American lesbians and gays. The African-American community calls on us to deny our love and attractions and to subvert them for the interests of the struggle for black liberation.

Sisters and brothers, we cannot and should not do either. When I think about our freedom I think about is our freedom to be totally and wholly who we are; black lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered person. Key to this is our taking up the instruments of power and organization. Key to this is our participation in the movement for freedom as out African-American gays and lesbians. We need to empower ourselves in the fight against all the forms of oppression that we face, be it racism, homophobia, or sexism. As Audre Lourde stated so succinctly, "Your silence will not protect you.: Our silence is killing us. We are dying of AIDS, we are suffering from all types of stress as we struggle to pass, to be straight acting and appearing." Our children are being taken from us. We allow the religious right (read: religious wrong) to coopt the leaders of our church communities. We silently listen to homophobic death dealing tirades from the pulpit and believe the lies that we are an abomination and are going to hell. When are we going to say, no!? We add black gays and lesbians have gone beyond hiding in the closet. We lie in the tomb of our fears waiting as Lazarus waited for someone to say, "Come out." We lie in the tomb of our self-hatred waiting for a rebirth, a resurrection.

The level of participation of black gays and lesbians in this years march was beautiful. It was a sign of the coming spring for our community. The fact that the Bayard Rustin rally was primarily a manifestation of the black gay and lesbian community here in Atlanta is also commendable. Yet the majority of persons in the contingent were still white gay and lesbian. Their presence and their wish to commemorate the legacy of Dr. King is welcomed. The question is, where were you? African-American gay men particularly were noticed in their scarcity. Sisters, certainly outnumbered the brothers. Why is that? I don't have an answer. The challenge for us is to free ourselves from ourselves, or rather free ourselves from the shackles of our fear. We will not be free unless we chose to be free. We will have no power unless we empower ourselves. We are very powerful, because we are every where. The time has come for us to come together and join as one in the power of unity and of love, in the spirit of Dr. King and of Bayard Rustin.



When I think about our freedom, what I think about is our freedom to be totally and wholly who we are; black lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered person.... We need to empower ourselves in the fight against all the forms of oppression that we face, be it racism, homophobia, or sexism.

ART AUCTION

AIDS Education/Services for Minorities is sponsoring an

Art Auction

and Banquet on Saturday, March 23, 1996 at 6:30 p.m. in the King Plow Art Center, 887 West Marietta St., Atlanta. Guest speaker: Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney. For information or tickets, call Delores Rollins (404) 753-2900. All proceeds benefit AESM.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

African American Historic Bike Tour sponsored by Georgia Ride for a Cure, monthly training ride. A bike tour of

African-American Historic Sites.

Call (404) 874-6782 for more information today.

CONGRATULATIONS

Happy Birthday

Madam Chair! Gail Booker, March 3rd.

ENTERTAINMENT

Join First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta

COFF-E HOUSE

Friday, March 1, 1996 at 8 p.m. and every first Friday of the month. Featuring: E-Cong's Very Own "Bahama Mamas" and opening act Sandra Litell, blues/slide guitarist. $5 admission. Call (404) 378-5570 for information.

EXPO

1996 Women's Business Expo. 15 entrepreneurs speak about

"How to Start Your Own Business!"

Hear owners of a limousine company, theatre/music company, automobile repair, etc. February 24, 1996, 3 p.m.–7 p.m. at **Obvious Choices**, 122 N. Avondale Road, Avondale Estates, GA (404) 294-0704. $3 Admission. Wine and cheese networking immediately following.

MEETINGS

ZAMI, Atlanta's Premier African Lesbian Organization will host a fund-raiser on Tuesday, February 13 at 9p.m. to benefit

Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund

Advance tickets $5.00. Call (404) 524-0304.

Third **Atlanta Lambda Center,** Community Forum:

Celebration of Black History Month

"Unity Through Personal Empowerment" Co-sponsors: Black & White Men Together, Dyfferent Gyrl Production, Hospitality Atlanta, Les Femimes Elegant, Phat Jam Production, Positive Black Lesbians United, Prizm, Second Sunday Discussion Group, Sisters of 30 Something Special, SONG, Spelman College Lesbian, Bi-Sexual Alliance, The ADODI MUSE, Think It's Not When It Iz, Inc., ZAMI. Keynote speakers: Mandy Carter and Dr. Elias Farajaje-Jones. Sunday, February 11, 1996, 3-5 PM, Sisters Chapel, Spelman University. Come and join us! We have hometown

entertainment and more! $5 Donation requested. Includes a chance to win an original painting and door prizes. Reception to follow at Karats, 511 Peachtree Street at the corner of Renaissance & Peachtree St.

The Art of Love

Throughout history artists have captured their most intimate images of love on canvas. Everyone is welcome to join us February 14, 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Level 2 Fine Arts Gallery, 385 Marietta Street for a romantic evening. Call (404) 522-8477.

PARTIES

A Party Network Affair & Edison's Night Club; Holiday Inn—Duluth; 6050 Peachtree Industrial Blvd., Saturday, February 17, 1996, 11:30 pm to 3 am; $5.00. Special performance by OM-Z Dance Company.

CHA-CHA House presents

AMOR

at Club Revolution, Friday, February 16, 11p.m. to 4 a.m. with DJ Carlos Morales. For information, call 770-908-5340

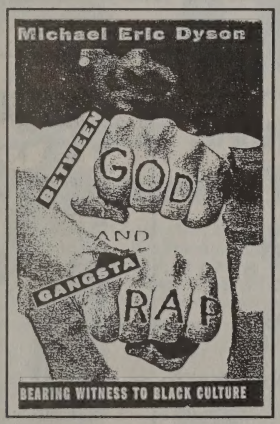
Women in Dallas

Valentine's Day Party

Saturday, Feb. 17, 10PM–3AM at State Fair Ground (1121 1st Ave.) near I-30 & 2nd and African-American Museum.. $10, $8 with 2 can goods. by Shades of Ebony Connection.

READINGS

Georgia State University, Spotlight Programs Board and the Department of Sociology present



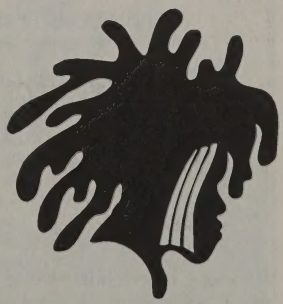
DR. MICHAEL E. DYSON

Professor, Department of Communication Studies, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. February 28, 1996, Wednesday, 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm, urban Life Auditorium (Piedmont Ave & Decatur St.). A Public Lecture: The Reverend Dyson, Ph.D. is the author of three books: Between God and Gangsta Rap: Bearing Witness to Black Culture: Reflecting Black: AFRICAN-AMERICAN Cult Criticism and; The Myth and Meaning of Malcolm X. Free and open to all students & the entire GSU Community. Reception and book signing immediately following the lecture. For more information contact: Spotlight (404) 651-2232; GSU Sociology (404) 651-2285. FAX: (404) 651-1712.

Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse presents the following events are upcoming in February at Outwrite:

Sunday, February 11, 7:30 pm— **Sparky's Valentine Poetry Hour** Featuring Adodi Muse, a gay AFRICAN-AMERICAN writing collective.

Sunday, March 3, 7:30 pm— E. Lynn Harris reading and signing **And This Too Shall Pass..**



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DO LORD REMEMBER ME

DO LORD REMEMBER ME

Feb. 14–Feb. 17, 14th Street Playhouse

The critics wrote of Jomandi's "Do Lord," it's "like sitting down with your grandparents...," it is "an exploration of collective memory because some things should never be forgotten." The play by JAMES DE JONGH, set in the Virginia Home for the Colored in 1936, weaves together the reminiscences of former slaves and places these voices of faith and courage against a backdrop of spirituals and visual images of modern day African-American achievers. Director Andrea Frye and members of the original cast recreate this stunning and unforgettable celebration of the generations.

Trick The Devil

...in the stellar tradition of artists RUBY DEE and OSSIE DAVIS GUY DAVES stars as the legendary blues singer Robert Johnson in

TRICK THE DEVIL

Feb. 23–March 10, 14th Street Playhouse

A woman loved a man; he done her wrong; she takes up with a stranger in town who plays upon her loneliness like the blues. The stranger, Robert Johnson, is heralded as the best blues musician who ever lived. Unknown at 24 and dead at 26, Johnson developed his blues "powers" so quickly that many believed the tale he told; he'd "tricked the devil" and risked his soul to learn to play his woman stealing blues. Writer BILL HARRIS, threads the music and legend of Robert Johnson into this mystical story set in a roadside cafe.

Call (404) 876-6346 or Ticketmaster (404) 817-8700

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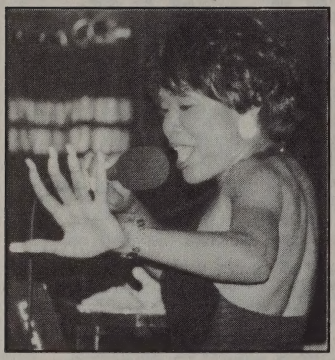

New Orleans entertainer, Mary Griffin, steams the house with her sultry looks and ballads at Karats.

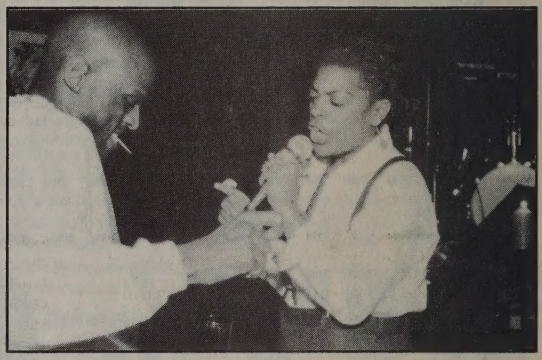

PHOTO: JENA P. JONES

Patrick jams with Adrienne Fishe and EMOJA at the Venus First Anniversary Bash held at Karats last month.

PHOTO: JENA P. JONES

Peep Show '96 raised funds for Children with AIDS/HIV at the Georgia Tech Performing Arts Center.

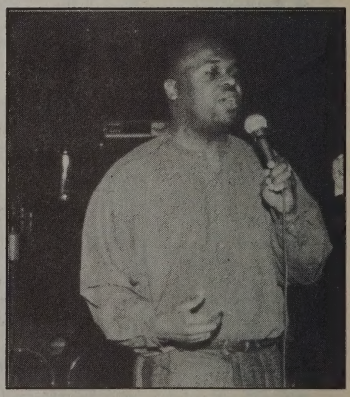

PHOTO: JENA P. JONES

Badili Jones speaks at Venus Anniversary Bash.

ORGANIZATIONS

Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

ADODI New York—A self-supporting organization of gay and bisexual men of African Heritage. 432 West 43rd St, Ste. 8045, N.Y., N.Y. 10036

African Ancestral Lesbian United for Societal Changed (Formerly Salsa Soul)—(212) 620-7310. Candice.

African American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA)—(404) 908-7371.

AIDS Education Services for Minorities (AESM)—P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, GA 30337. (404) 753-2900 or (404) 743-7733.

AIDS Response Knoxville—Suite 411, 109 Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919, (615) 450-2437.

AIDS Services in Asian Communities, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 212, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1938

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church—575 Boulevard. Sunday, 7 PM, evenings, 8:30 PM, (404) 622-1154.

Atlanta Lambda Center, Inc.—P.O. Box 15180, Atlanta, GA 30333. (404) 662-9010.

A. Lorde Collective—African-American Lesbians Organized to Renew Dignity and Empowerment. Hotline: (313) 862-3396.

AYA Institute—dedicated to the education and mental health of our community. P.O. Box 3824, Jersey City, N.J. 07303-3824 or (201) 451-3412.

Bisexual Womyn of Colour—BIWOC since 1991. P.O. Box 020136, Brooklyn, NY 11202-136. (212) 479-7886. Donna Reddy, pres.

Black & White Men Together—POB 1334, Atl., GA 30301-1334. (404) 892-BWMT.

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum—1219 S. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 964-7820. FAX (213) 964-7830.

Black Gay Pride Atlanta—P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, GA 30312. (404) 872-1097.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. (BLGP Inc.)—Box 7184, Washington, DC. 20024.

Black Women's Network—Box 5, 136 Kingsland Height St., London, England, UK/E8/2NS

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)—Meets every Friday at 8 PM at the Amassi Center. 3419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA. For more info, call Ms. Clydis (510) 649-0536.

BLUeS—Bronx Lesbians United in Sisterhood, Event Organization. (212) 330-9196

Boyz of Distinction—P.O. Box 78091, Atl., GA 30532.

Brothers Back-2-Back, Inc.—An African American HIV/AIDS Organization, P.O. Box 11366, Atlanta, GA 30310. Voice: (404) 593-5805.

Chicago Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays—(312) 871-2117.

Cinnamon Productions—Womyn of Color event organizers. (718) 994-0028.

Creation Woman—poets/artists & affiliates meet last Sun. each month. (310) 422-1970.

D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men and Bisexuals—(202) 388-8078.

Dyfferent Gyrl Production—P.O. Box 13346, Atlanta, GA 30324. (404) 908-5340.

Friend of Friends—(301) 735-5023; P.O. Box 77075, Washington, D.C. 20013

GALAEI (for Latino gay men), 1233 Locust St., 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 985-3382

Gay and Out Productions—P.O. Box 111, Clarkston, GA 30021-0111. (404) 299-7809

Gay Black Female (GBF)—6312 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 114, Hollywood, CA 90028. (310) 288-6315.

The Gay and Lesbian Center—208 W. 13th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011.

Gay/Lesbian Latino/a Community Organization Out Reach, Inc.—(404) 346-3922 or (800) 441-2437.

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teacher's Network—P.O. Box 5512, Atlanta, Georgia 31107. (404) 872-4320.

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)—2103 N. Decatur Rd., Suite 190, Decatur, GA 30033. PH: (404) 377-4258. EM: info@gabc.gaypride.com

Home Free Ministry—P.O. Box 688, Atl., GA 30301. (404) 818-2033.

Hospitality Atlanta—For Women of Color (404) 523-0228.

International Black Writers & Artists—meet 2nd Sunday Bladwin Hills/Crenshaw (213) 964-3721.

Las Buenas Amigas—(212) 868-7816. Carmen, The Gay & Lesbian Center, 208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011.

Latinos En Accion—Youth support group. P.O. Box 15388, Atlanta, GA 30325. (404) 621-5743. Yolanda Leeky, (404) 753-2840.

Lesbians Latinos en Nuestro Ambiente—(707) 292-7705.

LLEGO, National Latino/a Lesbian & Gay Organization—P.O. Box 44483, Wash., DC. 20026.

Malebox—Meeting black men. P.O. Box 75392, Wash., D.C. 20013.

Minority AIDS Project of Philly and Vicinity, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 218, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1937

MOCAA (Men of Color Against AIDS)—Boston, MA. (617) 442-3800

National Assoc. of Black & White Men Together—1747 Connecticut Ave., Washington, DC. 20020. (202) 462-3599.

National Black Women's Health Project—1237 Gordon, Street S.W., Atlanta, GA (404) 758-9590.

North Carolina Mobilization '96—P.O. Box 28718, Raleigh, NC 28718. (918) 828-3311

our cousin's house—An African American AIDS Organization. P.O. Box 10709, Atlanta, GA 30310. (404) 758-0397.

ONYX/Chicago—Leather Social Club for Men of Color and their friends. 1340 W. Irving Park Road, Suite 188, Chicago IL 60613.

Positive Black Lesbians United (PBLU)—P.O. Box 655, Avondale Estates, GA 30002. (404) 250-7950.

Pink Triangle Productions—Gay Female Entertainment Party Source. (770) 723-7292.

Project Open Hand, Atlanta—(404) 525-4620. Home delivered meals for people with AIDS related illness.

Project AZUKA, Inc.—An AIDS organization for women. P.O. Box 9173, Savannah, GA 31402. (912) 233-6733.

Pyramid Productions—Cultural Shows & Dances. (718) 622-5093.

Q-GLU—Queens Gays & Lesbians United. (718) 639-4951.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church—Box 50047, Atl., GA 30302. (404) 388-4624.

SAGE—Senior Action in a Gay Environment. (212) 741-2247.

SALGA—South Asian Lesbian Gay Association; P.O. Box 50, Cooper Station, NY, NY 10276-0050; (212) 294-2550; Email: salganyc@dorsai.org

Second Sunday Discussion Group—POB 1574, Decatur, GA 30031. (404) 629-0583.

Shades of Brown—Professional Womyn/Men of Color. (212) 439-1024.

Shades of Ebony Connections—For Women of Color, Dallas, (214) 570-5795.

Sisters of 30 Something Special—(404) 350-9758.

Sister Love, Inc.—(404) 753-7733, (404) 753-1500.

Sophisticated Ladies—Lesbian Group for Mature Women of Color. (202) 788-1866.

Southern Conference of Black Gay Men—P.O. Box 212421, Columbia S.C. 29221

Spelman College Lesbian Bi-Sexual Alliance—710 Peachtree St., Suite 126, Atlanta, GA 30308. (404) 908-5368.

The ADODI MUSE—a black gay male literary group; 348 Berean Ave. S.E., Atlanta, Ga 30312. (404) 521-2515.

The COLOURS Organization, Inc.—201 S. 12th., Ste. 1R, Phila. PA 19107. Education, prevention and support programs for sexual minority people of color. For more information, please contact (215) 627-6233.

The Men's Gathering—P.O. Box 190869, Dallas, Texas 75219-0869,(214) 521-5342, ext. 876. Meeting times: 4th Friday of each month, 7 pm

Tres—Dance Parties for Womyn of Color. (718) 670-3643

TRIKONE—An Asian gay and lesbian organization. trikatl@mindspring.com

ULOAH (United Lesbians of African Heritage)—1626 N. Wilcox Ave., #190, L.A., CA 90028. (213) 960-5051.

Unity, Inc. (for African American gay men), 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 214, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1876

Viva!—Lesbian and Gay Latino Arts Organization. (310) 301-8035.

Women in the Life—D.C.'s Black Lesbian party hotline. (202) 667-8078.

Women of Color Breast Cancer Survivors Support Project—8610 S. Sepulveda Blvd, Ste 200, L.A., CA 90045 (310) 216-3200.

WRFG Radio,Gay Graffiti with Deborah Paget—Thursdays, 7–8 PM.**Crossroads with Baldelie Jones**—3rd Thursday, 7–8 PM.**Sister Love, Sister's Time**—6 PM Thursdays"**Alternative Talk**"—2nd/4th Fridays, 6PM.

Yahimba, Lesbians of African Descent—1012 1/2 Dodge, Evanston, IL 60202 or (708) 328-7715

YouthPride—(404) 815-9965,Teen Support Group (13-18: Wed. evenings 6:30-8:00; Young Adult Personal Growth Group (18-24 yo): Wed. evenings 8:30-10:00.

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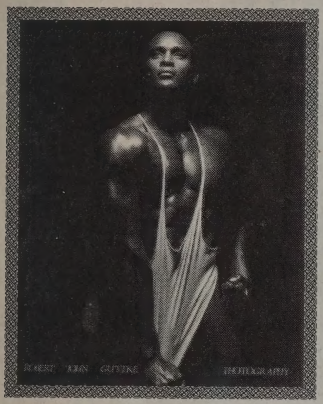

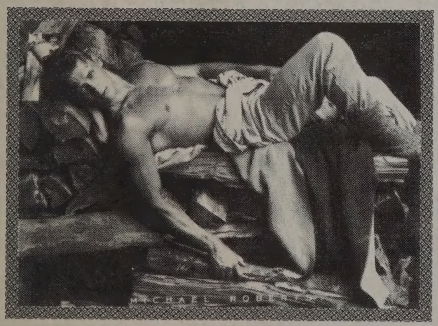

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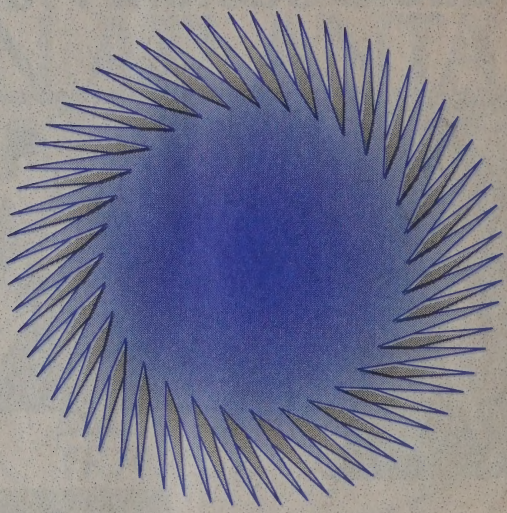

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December 1995–January 1996
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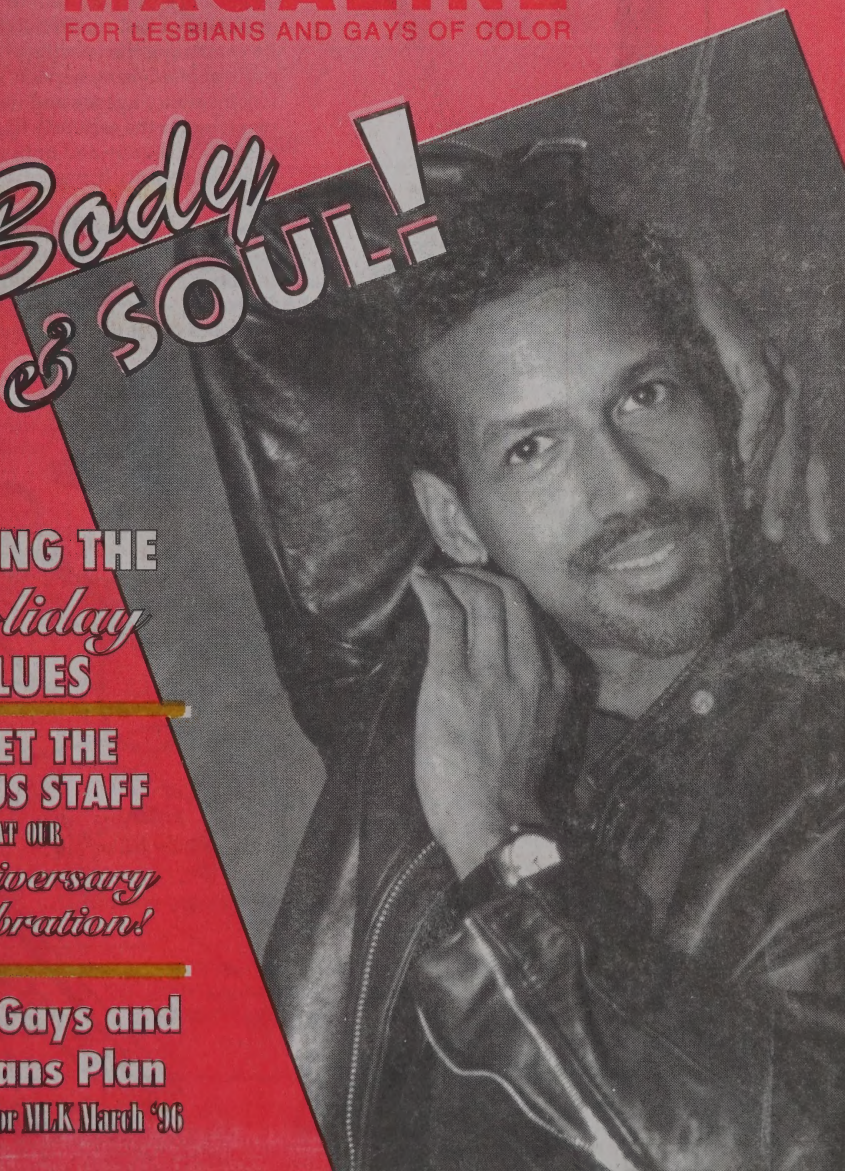
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR



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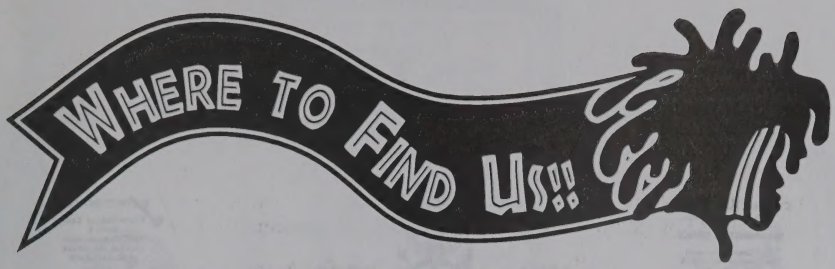

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October 27, 1995

Ms. Charlene Cothran, Publisher & Editor
Venus Magazine
Post Office Box 89238
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

Dear Ms. Cothran and the Readership of Venus Magazine:

Greetings and congratulation on the occasion of the "**First Anniversary**" of the publication of **Venus Magazine**! Originally, ***Venus Magazine*** was distributed throughout Atlanta's in-town communities . . . now, just one year later, you enjoy a distribution throughout the southeastern United States.

Venus Magazine, a magazine devoted to meeting the reading and informational needs of African American Gay and Lesbian people, fulfills a long overlooked void in the publishing world in Atlanta and the Southeast. Most notable though, ***Venus Magazine*** is the first magazine of its kind to practice the "politics of inclusion" by reaching out to the Puerto Rican, Cuban American, Asian American and other minority communities.

Congratulations to the owners, the staff and to the readership for making ***Venus Magazine*** such a smashing success in just one short year.

With best wishes for many more years of success, I remain

Sincerely,

Cynthia McKinney
Member of Congress

CAM:gsc

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BILL CAMPBELL
MAYOR

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November 28, 1995

Greetings:

As Mayor of the City of Atlanta, I am pleased to congratulate you on this first anniversary of *"VENUS MAGAZINE."*

With Atlanta being the host of the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games, we applaud your efforts. The Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgendered Community is an integral part of our City, and the celebration of diversity only helps to establish and enhance our cultural relationships.

On behalf of the people of Atlanta, I extend best wishes for continued growth and success.

Sincerely,

Bill Campbell

Bill Campbell

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December 7, 1995

Ms. Charlene E. Cothran
Publisher
Venus Magazine
P.O. Box 89238
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

Dear Ms. Cothran and the Readers of Venus Magazine:

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on the successful first year of business in District One. **Venus Magazine** has broken through new territory by appealing to the South's people of color and to our vital gay and lesbian community.

A publication such as **Venus Magazine** deserves recognition and support from the community. With the effort of people striving for the cutting edge, the different facets of our society are represented. This is this service Ms. Cothran has provided for Atlanta and the Southeast for the past year. I for one am proud to say that I have known her for ten years, and have a deep respect for her endeavors.

Congratulations to Charlene Cothran and **Venus Magazine** on your deserved success, and good luck in the future years of business!

Sincerely,

Vern E. McCarty

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Come Out, Come Home

A letter from the editor

Come Out, Come Home is a theme that has lived in my heart and mind since the Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum met in Los Angeles in the early 90's. I remember trying to imagine how a spiritually connected, black, lesbian, businesswoman could live and work openly and freely yet remain connected to her Black People.

As Venus Magazine celebrates one year of proudly coming out, my personal focus now moves towards coming home; home to my people.

One year ago, I attempted to celebrate Dr. King's legacy by marching with the 'larger' or 'white' gay contingent. I must say that I have never felt more disconnected in my entire life. I had the overwhelming sense that I was part of a purely political act. I wanted to turn to some and say "Where were you before you needed the 'civil rights' movement?! You don't march like I march!"

I march with the spirit of Dr. King's dream on my mind. I march remembering the anguish of my ancestors not so many generations ago. I march staring into the eyes of a million black men, with no fear, understanding what American society has done to them. I march with tears streaming down because I can't save all the homeless black children lost to a generation of crack parents. This year, I'm not worried about what's politically correct. I'm focused on what spiritually connects!

This year, many Proud African-American Gay Men & Lesbians are planning to march with the African-American community as a symbol of unity and a step toward reclaiming our place at the Black Family Table. Join us for the First Annual Bayard Rustin Pre-Rally and Martin Luther King, Jr. March on Monday January 15, 1996.

This Year, Come Out, Come Home.

Venus™ MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

December 1995–January 1996
Vol. 2., No. 1

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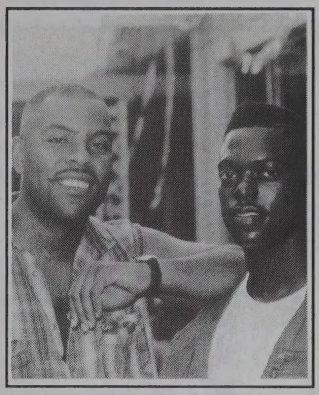

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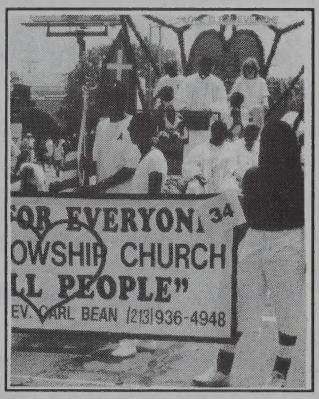
Kick The Blues!



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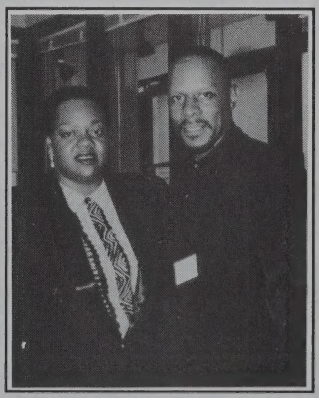
Rally for Rustin!



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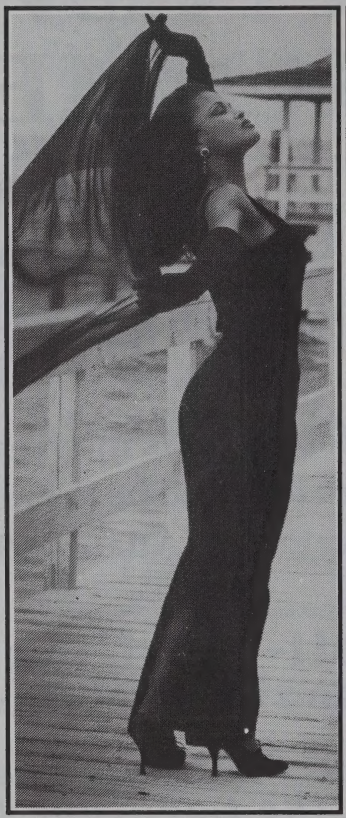

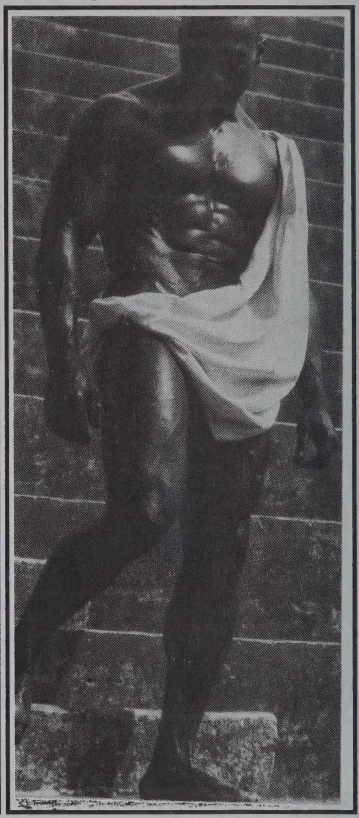

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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY Venus Magazine

Venus Landin
May 17, 1961–March 2, 1993

PHOTO BY POYO HINTON PHOTOGRAPHY

Venus Landin was born and raised in Saginaw, Michigan, where she spent most of her adult life before moving to Atlanta and getting actively involved in the gay and lesbian movement. Venus served as co-chair of AALGA (African-American Lesbian Gay Alliance), participated on the Atlanta Lesbian/Gay Pride Committee, Hospitality Atlanta, ZAMI, and the city council's Lesbian/Gay Public Safety Task Force. She was also the mother of a now 14-year-old son, Bobby Landin. To those who knew her and worked with her, Venus Landin's death is still tremendously felt.

"To the African-American community, we've lost someone who was a leader and also a worker," said Duncan Teague, in a Southern Voice article published at the time of her death. "That's how she led people—she got in there and did the grunt work. Nothing was ever too humble to her." "And to the larger lesbian/gay community, I don't know if they can ever fathom what they have lost," he continued. "Venus was willing to deal with the racism, and see the bigger picture."

"She was willing to take risks," said Teague, "but she would much rather be playing softball or having a beer and kicking back with friends." In between committee meetings, Landin did just that. Her bowling team came in first in Hospitality Atlanta bowling league, and she played softball and covered basketball for the organization. Venus connected with everyone.

In December of 1995, this publication, named in her honor, rolled off the press. Throughout the year the Venus staff members have contributed their time and expertise to bring our community a publication that we could be proud to share. Without these individuals, this work would not be possible! Stop by and greet them in person on Sunday, January 14 at 6:30 pm during the Venus 1st Anniversary salute by the National Black Arts Festival!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

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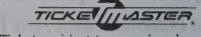

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Photography by: Dona Ann McAdams

CHARLENE E. COTHRAN, publisher, editor in chief, is a graduate of Georgia Institute of Technology, School of Chemical Engineering. Cothran has spent the past 20 years in Atlanta. Born and raised in Trenton, New Jersey, she proudly recalls the development of her activism and leadership skills as a young member of the St. Phillips Baptist Church. Cothran has successfully sharpened her marketing skills during her 10 years as a residential real estate professional and plans to launch her own brokerage firm after the '96 games. Her motto for the 21st century... "We can have it all!"

ROSA BOWLES is distribution manager for Venus magazine. Currently enrolled at DeKalb College, Rosa works as a computer assistant for the USDA. She enjoys outdoor activities and helping the community.

ULESTER DOUGLAS, MSW, has written several articles on relationships including "Unraveling the Mystery of Attraction" and "Coming out of the Second Closet." Ulester is a therapist and consultant in private practice and an instructor with Men Stopping Violence in Atlanta.

DR. SHIRLENE HOLMES was bred and buttered in New York. She earned her B.A. in English from York College of the City University of New York. She went on to establish herself as an educator, playwright and solo performer. Dr. Holmes holds an M.F.A. in Theatre and a doctorate in Speech Communication from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Her most recent works, "Elle" and "A Lady and a Woman" have had successful productions both in Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, GA. Dr. Holmes is currently an assistant professor in the Communication Department at GSU.

REV. KAMAU IFOMA, founder of Home Free Ministry in Atlanta, he has published several writings on spirituality in the gay and lesbian community. His teachings have inspired many, and his articles continue to enhance our publication. A long-time resident of Atlanta, Kamau also heads the "singles" ministry at Home Free!

DR. LEONARD JACK, JR. has been a Behavioral Scientist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention since 1992. He is currently an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Morehouse School of Medicine. Dr. Jack has taught at Howard University and The Pennsylvania State University. He received his undergraduate training at Virginia State University and Master and Doctor of Philosophy in Health Education from Penn State University. Dr. Jack has published extensively in the disease prevention and health promotion literature regarding HIV/AIDS, cancer and substance abuse. Dr. Jack enjoys socializing with close friends, reading, volunteering at his local church and participating in an aggressive cardiovascular and strength training program.

DOUG JONES is a novelist from Brooklyn, New York, and has written numerous articles for Venus, including interviews with authors James Earl Hardy and E. Lynn Harris and activist Phill Wilson. Currently living in Atlanta, Doug enjoys stimulating conversation and traveling.

JENA P. JONES is a 35-year-old photographer who has lived in Atlanta for 29 years. She works in both traditional black and white color mediums, and has most recently begun to explore the digital process. She is using her documentary and technical skills to move her photography into the commercial arena. Jena has had her work published in many exhibits. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Arkansas at Pine

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Bluff in 1983. Currently, Jena works with The Coca-Cola Company where part of her duties involve responding to in-house photographic requests from the Company's Legal Division.

JOJO This lipstick lesbian who hails from Philadelphia, believes in personal empowerment and its need among the black populace. JoJo is also kissing cousin (first cousin) to playwright and actor Blaine Teamer, who created an uproar with his award winning one man show, Black Coffee. Currently the dynamic duo are collaborating on their first novel, "The Life and Loves of LeeLee: A Drag Queen Trapped in a Lesbian's Body leading a Bisexual Lifestyle."

LEROY SCOTT, illustrator and long-time Atlanta resident, is no stranger to Atlanta's arts community. His work hangs in numerous restaurants and night clubs including Loretta's Dance Club. Talent comes in many forms and figures. This artist's extraordinary vision is electric. . . It plugs into your heart and soul.

RON SINGLETON, 37, born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, currently resides in Los Angeles. Ron believes that the Black Gay Movement needs to be documented and has dedicated himself to being one of its documentarians. Ron describes himself as a freelance photojournalist/imagemaker whose work has been featured in numerous Black Gay and other magazines including the LA Weekly and LA Watts Times, and in advertising. Ron was one of the artists featured in the first annual African-American Gay Art show in Los Angeles in 1995 and also had a one-man exhibit at the Cafe WoodFox also in LA. "I love to show who we are and that we are more than just sexual persons. I want the world to know we are friends, lovers, families and more." Ron is currently single and would like to find that perfect man who is strong, spiritually centered, supportive and secure in himself as a person and as a black Gay man.

CRAIG WASHINGTON was born and raised in New York City where he attended Columbia University and worked as a freelance writer. He has performed poetry with a choreopeom ensemble at Hunter College. In 1990, he started volunteering with the Brooklyn AIDS Task Force. In 1992, he and his partner, Leonardo Stroud, moved to Atlanta. He is currently employed at AID Atlanta as the African American Outreach Coordinator and is also a member of the Statewide HIV Planning Council. He enjoys reading, writing poetry, jazz and R&B concerts and dancing, of course.

EVE WERNICKY, 26, has been a featured writer in Venus whose contribution includes articles on playwright Dr. Shirlene Holmes, choreographer and dancer David Rousseve, and gay activist Urvashi Vaid, the first person of color to become executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Task Force. She is a former writer for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. She is currently working on a screenplay about her Cuban-Mexican and Jewish roots. She is single and at the risk of sounding like a cheesy desperate ad, is looking for a sincere woman she can dance with to Billie Holiday's "Our Love is Here to Stay."

Other contributors not pictured but whose work has greatly enhanced the quality of the publication are...

TONY DANIELS is a contributing editor and deacon in training at Faith Unity Fellowship Church.

CHARLES EASLEY is a special events photographer and films editor.

TRE JOHNSON is our national liaison, writer, singer, poet, and performance artist.

DR. RODERICK K. LINZIE, Associate Professor of Sociology, Georgia State University

BESS KNOWINGS, Simplicity Attractions, New York.

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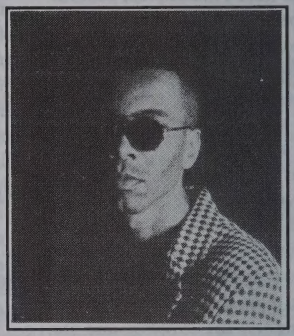

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PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name: . . . . . Chris Ruffin

Age: 32

Status: . . . . . Devoted

Career: . . . . . Property Manager/ Entertainment Promoter

Hometown: . . . Brooklyn, New York

Latest Book: . . "Lettin It All Hang Out" by RuPaul

Chris has successfully taken the lead of Hospitality Atlanta as Club Manager and Entertainment Coordinator. In addition, she is quickly emerging as one of Atlanta's top female D.J's. "My future plan is to take the entertainment of Atlanta's Lesbian and Gay community to an all-time high. Mom always said that with a positive mind, a true heart, and a strong faith in God—Success is Yours!"

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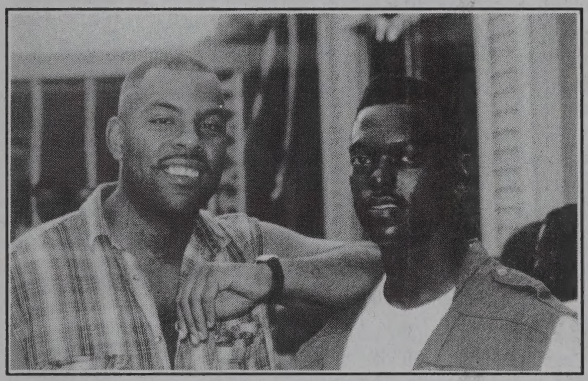
Kick the HOLIDAY Blues

Lesbian and Gay Couples: Coping with the Holiday Blues

Bonnie Harrison, MSHS, CSAC



PHOTOGRAPH BY RON SINGLETON

The holiday season, particularly Christmas, Kwanzaa and New Year's are times when many of us reflect on the "good times" and all the fun we had over the past years. These are times we pull out the pictures, reminisce about who was with whom, who did what with whom, and other juicy tidbits. In other words, these are times when many lesbians and gays, as well as bi-sexuals, drag queens and transgenders get together to share, "pour the tea, and dish the dirt." For some others, however, reflection on the holidays can conjure deep sadness and much discomfort.

There are many justifiable reasons for people's sadness and discomfort. I have attempted to address some of those issues most frequently discussed by many of the black lesbian and gay individuals whom I counsel in my private practice. I chose to discuss black lesbian and gay couples in this article, however, because of the unique issues that surface for them during the holiday season, particularly Christmas. Additionally, many not-so-happy-and-gay emotions can arise during the holiday season as we attempt to satisfy cultural norms, familial expectations, socio-political commitments, religious and spiritual rituals, and the demands of love relationships, recovery and healing. There is also for many, that extra financial burden of trying to deal with the holidays unemployed, and with no available credit on your Visa, Discover, and MasterCard. Since you haven't lost your whole mind (or did you?), you know better than to even dream about charging anything else to American Express. Yet, you still want to buy or exchange gifts for certain special people.

Everyday issues confronting lesbian and gay couples very often stem not only from the attitudes of society and within our own cultures and religious groups. But rather, emanate from within the black family system where the values, beliefs and attitudes of the dominant culture about homosexuality have been psychologically, attitudinal, and behaviorally incorporated. This phenomenon exists even though

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

black culture reflects some of the most destructive aspects of the very same society that has oppressed our parents and ancestors for centuries. It should come as no surprise then, that many experience a myriad of emotions during the holiday season that do not necessarily culminate in individuals and couples feeling happy while being gay. There are many explanations I could give; however, I believe that the concept and reality of family is at the core of the holiday celebration and rituals. No matter who you are, or where you are, you would like to be able to spend quality time with family. However, unresolved issues that exist between parent and child or lovers will continue if you don't understand that the feelings of happiness you seek are generated from within yourself and won't result from someone or something else making you feel that way.

I truly believe that if you change your thinking you can change your life. This is a belief that I have tested, and I challenge you to do the same. Test it. One day, when you are feeling sad, angry, alone, afraid, or unhappy, take time to stop what you are doing, take three deep breaths, relax your eyes, jaws, shoulders, hands, torso, legs, and feet. Ask your Self to tell your mind what it is that you are thinking about that is causing you to feel this way. If you are feeling sad and demotivated, and can't identify any reason, ask your Self to help you think about something that you have a right to feel angry about—even if you are not conscious of feeling angry. More often than not, your spirit will tell your mind, and your mind will bring this truth into your awareness. You'll know that this is a truth because your feeling of sadness will lift, and you'll experience a spurt of energy.

Healing work or "cleaning exercises" are a gift we give ourselves when we come to believe that we are worth it. It's just that simple. In addition, changing the way we think and view the world and ourselves in relation to others in it, allows us to see each pain and disappointing as a new opportunity for us to create our own reality—to make our lives living examples of what we think we deserve and what type of commitment we are willing to make to ourselves in order for our dreams to happen. Life also offers through concrete, living examples, opportunities to reevaluate and redefine our own personal relationship with God, or Higher Power, the Orisha or our Ancestors. This will allow you to have a spiritual plan of action when all else fails.

Primary Relationships

A couple often mirrors the values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of their parents and caregivers. Predictably, adult lives and personalities will mirror the themes and expectations of their significant others. These factors become the variables that affect their relationships in both constructive and destructive ways. Individuals are so deeply affected by their primary relationships that many go through life with a seemingly uncontrollable urge to re-live the past and to re-create and re-experience old situations, even when they are not satisfying. What a shock it must be to recognize attitudes, behaviors, and values in our mate that remind you of that very same individual you still have unresolved issues with. Yet this is the person you chose for your mate. How many of us have conjured our mothers, fathers, grandmothers, aunts, uncles, sisters, and brothers into our bedrooms and kitchens, then expected our "marriages" with our soulmates to work? These choices are very often the basis for the "problems" that form like a heavy cloud to darken our spirits and create discomfort in our psyches and relationships during the holiday season.

This brings me to another important area of our lives that has dampened the spirits of black lesbian and gay couples in ways that are incomprehensible to so many of our straight friends and family members. "The Holidays" are extremely important in the black gay community. They allow us to come together as a community to create and re-create a personal sense of family. HIV, AIDS, chronic illness, marathon hospital visits, death, funerals, memorials and drug abuse have decimated the gay and lesbian family. No other group has ever faced the type of devastation and social stigmatization that those in the LIFE have had to endure. Never has a whole group of people been held responsible for a disease. Some critics believe AIDS became a disease that God created and heaped upon homosexuals because they dared life out this abomination, and because they succumbed to the most vile and sinful sexual acts. This does not mean that great strides haven't been made, however. What it does mean though is that gay and lesbian couples have more than a fair share of challenges to contend

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

with. Missing old friends, either because they have died, or because they are too sick to be with us during the holidays is saddening, and yes, even depressing. Seeing friends and family members who might be ill does raise the question: will they be here this time next year, or, will I?

This state of affairs can also be the source of much discord, particularly for those gays and lesbians who are in relationships with people who are in recovery and they are not; or those whose partner is HIV positive and they are not. If co-dependency is an issue for you, or for both you and your partner, getting through those times can be extremely difficult and emotionally draining. These are truly trying times—times when it would be wonderful to have mommy, daddy, sister, brother, grandma or anybody in the family's shoulder to cry on, but alas, like so many of us, you, too, come from a dysfunctional family system, and holding people hostage to unrealistic expectations serves no useful purpose.

Coping with the "holiday blues" begins when you decide to take back your power. Don't let the blues have it any longer. Decide to leave the blues at home this season. Besides, who would want to have such a disrespectful guest hanging around you for the holidays, anyway? It should be clear to you by now that the blues don't know how to act. They'll come visiting without being invited; and they'll show up and impose themselves anytime they feel like it. So get ready, a change is gonna come; on your mark, get set, wait for the slightest hint of an opportunity to leave the blues behind, get gorgeous, and GO TAKE THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!!!

What Color Are Your Holidays Red, Green or —Blue?

We are in the midst of the holidays once again: that special time of the year when people spend time with family and friends renewing old acquaintances and celebrating the new. It's supposed to be the happiest time of the year , but for many the holidays are dark. If you happen to be one of the millions of Americans who suffer from the holiday blues, here is a list of a few of the factors that might be contributing to them and a few things you can do to manage them.

CAUSE	REMEDY
1. Financial Strain	1. Realize that the holidays are a time for renewal and not necessarily for spending money.
2. Unfulfilled expectations	2. Instead of mopping around because you are not with that special someone, donate your time to feeding the hungry and visiting those in hospitals and nursing homes.
3. Changes in living and work habits	3. Keep your holiday schedule as normal as possible by getting up and going to bed at your regular times.
4. Dietary Concerns	4. Put only half of what you want on your plate. Try one fourth of the amount you really want for dessert.Try non-alcoholic beer, wine and mixes.
5. Unlimited time with relatives and friends	5. Set a start and finish time for family gatherings so people will know when to go home.
6. Noise pollution	6. Turn off the television, radio and record player when no one is listening. Limit children's time on video games. When everyone is talking turn off everything else.
7. Allergens	7. Limit your intake of eggs, milk, chocolate, red wine, spices and other edibles that may cause difficulty in breathing and nausea. Check for allergies to pine, snow flocking and angel hair.

The holidays may not be the perfect, magical time that we see on television, but they need not be the days that we spend in the abyss. Sit down and take a look at those things that may be causing you holiday stress and see how you can change them so that you not only survive, but thrive during this holiday season. Happy Holidays!

Marquita Byrd, Ph.D. is an associate Professor of Communication Studies at San Jose State University. She teaches courses in interpersonal and multicultural communication, interviewing and public address.

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The body and Soul of David Rousseve

by Eve Wernicky

It is an unusually glorious Saturday for fall and 35 year old David Rousseve is in town sizing up the metamorphic Atlanta Ballet which has enlisted the choreographer to help in its rejuvenation attempt. Artistic director of his own dance company, choreographer, writer, and director, Rousseve performed "Body and Soul," a collection of three works featuring a made-for-Atlanta world premiere, Feb. 1-4 at the Fox Theater.

"The (Ballet) is branching out in new directions," said Rousseve, "it's good that they are doing half classical, half modern but my work is much more experimental."

Experimental depicts almost every aspect of Rousseve's life.

Born and raised near the projects of Houston, he was exposed to the arts and humanities at a young age upon the insistence of his mother. Herself a product of the ghetto, she took theater classes and made it a point to share her discoveries with her children.

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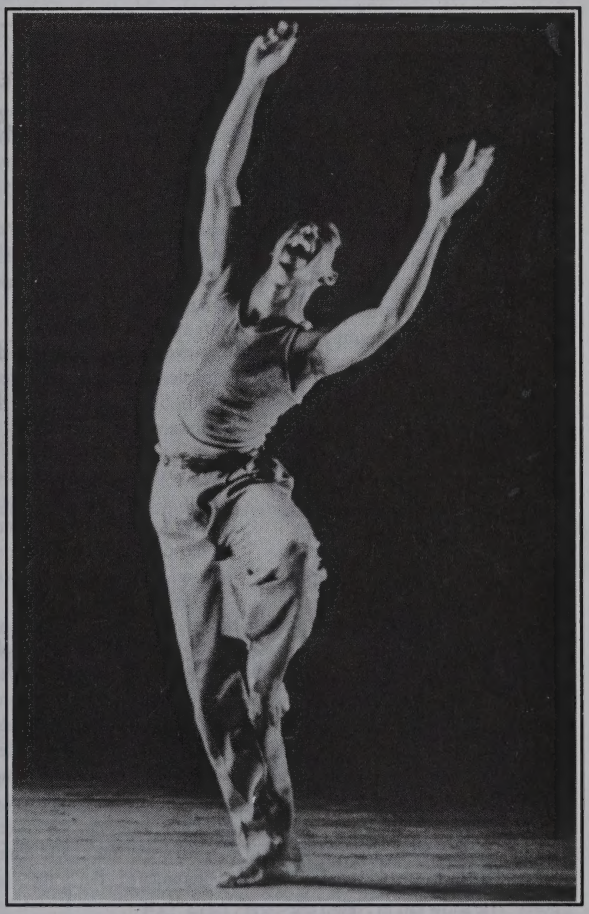


Rousseve began taking dancing classes at 14 to supplement his interest in acting.

Although his interest in dance grew, he also became curious about politics and law. In 1981, he graduated magna cum laude from Princeton University with a degree in political science and theater dance.

After graduation he danced in the companies of Jean Erdman, Senta Driver, Kathryn Posin, Stephanie Skura, Yoshiko Chuma and the Toronto Dance Theater. He also continued to dabble in acting with several television credits and stints off Broadway.

Then in 1988, he created his own dance company called REALITY.

" Part of my company's artistic agenda is to create a dialog with as many communities and audiences as possible, both on stage and off stage," Rousseve said, explaining the company's fruition.

The hands-on choreographer first received critical acclaim for "Pull Your Head to the Moon...Tales of Creole Women," a multimedia work retelling the story of his Creole grandparents and their cultural deracination.

PBS commissioned a film adaptation of the piece in 1992 and Rousseve later turned it into a full-length eight-part dance series called Urban Scenes/Creole Dreams.

His work, "Whispers of Angels," takes on the issue of death, AIDS, and father-son relationships. Funk diva Me'shell Ndege Ocello is the music composer. The show ran in New York from Nov. 27 through Dec. 3 at the Majestic Theater.

Venus: Does your interest in politics reflect your work?

Rousseve: My work used to be blatantly political. Now, a lot of my characters are third-world people. They are gay, lesbian black; the world is more about the have-nots, and putting them in a social contemporary setting that makes them very political."

Venus: Whispers of Angels purports the social notion surrounding death.

Rousseve: "It is a statement of death and dying. Death is imminent and a man who is dying, is having his life flash before his eyes. It is a piece of joy and a lot of melancholy."

Venus: In the new piece you are working with Me'shell Ndege Ocello. What does she bring to the work?

Rousseve: "She is writing the music and is great to work with. She contributes to the perspective of the piece."

Venus: You are very involved in your work. You direct, produce, write, choreograph and even dance in many pieces. How does the creative process flow?

Rousseve: "One of the advantages of the process is that you turn to your own personal issues—which is probably also the hardest part of the process when you have to face things that are difficult to face. Usually, I develop characters in text, the music and dance is formulated. But sometimes

PHOTOGRAPH BY IRIA JONES

that does change for every piece."

Venus: Artistically, who has inspired you the most?

Rousseve: "Probably, Toni Morrison"

Venus: A writer?

Rousseve: "Yeah, I know but I have a lot of text in my pieces. I think she shows what a lot of artists of color can do. I think she has great technical skills in conveying our culture with warmth and depth."

Venus: Who has inspired you most in your everyday life?

Rousseve: "My grandmother has been my greatest influence."

Venus: "Pull Your Head to the Moon...Tales of a Creole Woman" is based on her life experiences. You later very interestingly expand that piece to "Urban Scenes/ Creole Dreams."

Rousseve: "The intent was to juxtapose her early life with urban life; her world and our world. It looks a her loss and our loss. She grew up in the

heart of Louisiana swamp land and was part African, part French, part (Native American) Indian."

Venus: What is it that you want the audience to walk away with?

Rousseve: "It's all about communicating. I have been privileged that being black I have been able to speak to different people... non-black, gay, non-gay. I have the opportunity to preach to the non-converted. There aren't a lot of people who have the opportunity to play to a wide range of audiences. If you look at something like ballet or dance, most of the audiences are older white straight crowds. what I want more than anything is for them to see the characters as human beings."

Venus: What, so far, has been the pinnacle of your career?

Rousseve: "The opportunity to travel to Europe and have the company play in places such as France and Brazil. But to me, the press and the accolades are not what's important. What totally overshadows that is when you touch people."

Venus: Do you find that culling from your own personal experience makes the work cathartic for you?

Rousseve: "Certainly, and I hope it's that way for the audience too. My grandmother's best friend was raped and I try to deal with the issue. Also, I've included the issue of abuse as a child and my own child abuse as a reference point. It is therapeutic because you go through a real journey into the psyche—for better or for worse."

Venus: Why the company name REALITY?

Rousseve: "I think that some ballet has nothing to do with contemporary reality. I hope that in 10 years I'll still be working with the company because there are a lot of good younger companies doing work in touch with today's society."

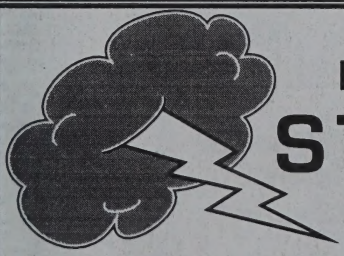
Venus: Among your accolades is a fellowship from the National Endowment of the Arts, I'd be remiss not to ask your take on the flap over that issue?

Rousseve: "It's horrifying on a cultural level. I originally had a two-year fellowship, but the (NEA) has just told me that they are going to award the fellowship on a year-to-year basis because they don't think they will be around in two years. The bottom line is that in the PC society that we live in, whatever is minority or controversial, whatever is black or gay is going to get cut out first."

Venus: How is that?

Rousseve: "It's the world we live in."

Eve Wernicky is a freelance writer and former journalist of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.



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PROFILE OF A MAN

Name: . . . . . Rich Williams

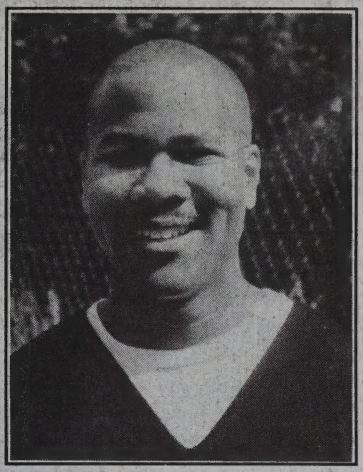
Age: 25

Status: . . . . . Dating

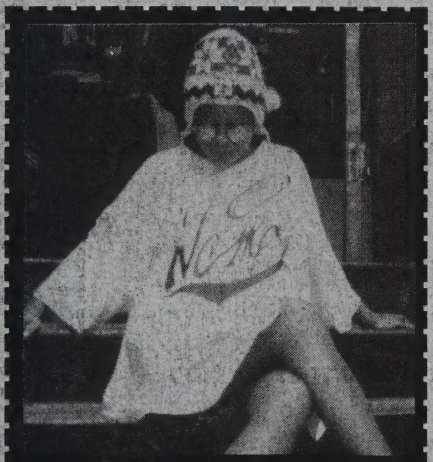
Career: . . . . . Development Assistant for Harvard AIDS Institute

Hometown: . . Boston

Latest Book: . "Prophetic Reflections" by Cornel West



In his spare time, Rich loves to "surf the net," get involved in AIDS/BGM related events and listen to his ever-growing CD collection of over 600+ titles.



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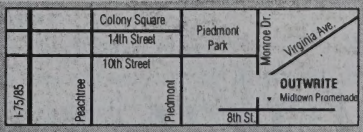

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I know what the caged bird feels, alas!...
When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream of glass;
When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals—
I know what the caged bird feels!

Paul Laurence Dunbar

Have you ever had a dream? A dream that you knew no one else could fulfill because this dream was just for you. Maybe you have dreamed of being CEO of your own corporation. Or you have dreamed of traveling the world over. Maybe your dream has been to perform on the stages of Broadway or the movie sets of Hollywood. This dream has become so real for you that you can see, touch, taste, smell and hear every aspect of this dream.

And yet, even with all the good feelings about the dream, there always seems to be that doubt or fear that holds you back. You think of all the statistics which show how a large percentage of upstart businesses fail in their first year. Your family's constant disagreement of your choices in life ring in the back of your head. You've never gone to school to prepare for this. And of course you know that only 1 in a million make it successfully.

Have you ever had a dream, caged in the doubts and fears of your beliefs?

The basis for what we call failure is simply a belief system in one's inability to succeed. It has been so ingrained and conditioned into the depth's of our souls that we don't believe that we have

what it takes to make it in this world. Hundreds of years in slavery and after slavery stripped the African people, worldwide, of its basic belief in self. We have been taught, purposefully and systematically, that someone outside of ourselves always knew what was best for us. And being the good students that we are we learned to follow these instructions very well.

Your failures in life come from not realizing your nearness to success when you give up.

Yoruba Proverb

Take a moment to think about the good feelings that you get when you are unconsciously dreaming your dream. Then think of the mental tapes that play as you "regain" consciousness. If you are one who has not pursued or realized your dream then the tapes probably have the message of "I can't do this... who do I think I am... how will I pay my bills... do I have what it takes?" Now think for a moment again. Which of these appear to have the most energy within it? Which of these messages tend to get you most excited? Once again, if you are one who has not followed your dream the message of "I can't" shouts much louder to you than the message of "I can".

Those tapes that you hear are firmly logged into your subconscious mind. The part of the mind that acts out, if you know what I mean. Because the subconscious holds our memory and it never forgets, it is where we generally find our level of intention. Intention is the energy that drives what we truly believe into being. For example, if you are in a relationship that seems to be going nowhere, both of you are constantly thinking of your disappointment and utter disgust with the way the relationship is unfolding, and yet you keep trying to make it work. Regardless of how much effort you put into making the relationship work, disappointment has probably become the dominant force in your thoughts. Therefore you subconsciously begin to work harder to sabotage the relationship than you do to save it. Your intention has become to release rather than to save and this message is now holding a majority of stock in your energy system.

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he

Proverbs 23:7

Don't give up 5 minutes before the miracle.

Iyanla Vanzant

It matters not how straight the gate
How charged with punishment the scroll
I AM the master of my fate
I AM the captain of my soul

Invictus

So how does this work with your dreams? When your thoughts have more energy riding in the thought of "I can't fulfill this dream", then you're right, you can't. But don't give up! There is more than just hope. Remember, there has been a process that conditioned you to have the belief that you do. That same process can be used to move you to rethink your position. The difference this time is that you are in control of the conditioning process. YOU have the power to control what goes in to your beliefs and what comes out. And oh yes! It is very important that you force out those beliefs that are no longer beneficial to you. And I mean THROW THEM OUT! Begin to deny their power in and over you.

Replace them with affirmations that represent who you truly are. You truly are a SUCCESSFUL EXPRESSION OF THE CREATOR. You are DIVINE. You are OMNIPOTENCE, OMNISCIENCE, OMNIPRESENCE and OMNIACTIVITY. You are PROSPEROUS to the point of OVERFLOW. There is nothing that can be denied you when you know the truth about your beingness. You are the IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF SPIRIT. That means when you look in the mirror what you see is SPIRIT looking back at you.

A caged dream is like an enslaved man. It cannot fulfill itself without being freed first. And remember, it took more than a day for you to think the way that you do. So don't get disappointed if nothing changes today or tomorrow. Be persistent. You deserve it. You are worth it. You are the BEST! You ARE 1 in a million.

Just BELIEVE! And all your dreams shall be added unto you.

Reverend Kamau Ifoma is founder of HomeFree Ministries

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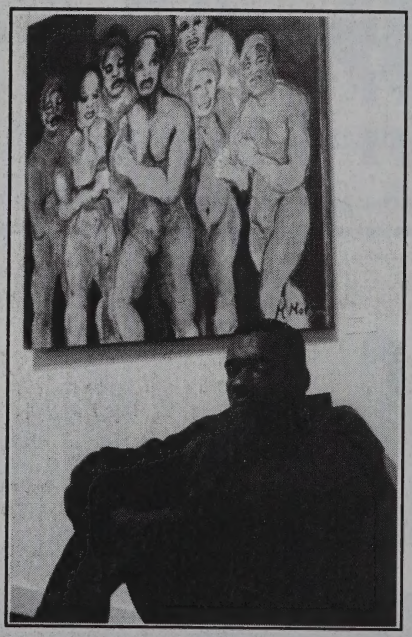
Michael C. Morgan

Visual artist Michael C. Morgan has been commissioned to produce an original work commemorating the 1st anniversary of Venus Magazine. The unveiling will take place on Sunday, January 14 at Karats, 511 Peachtree St. at 6:30 PM during a ceremonial salute by the N.B.A.F.

Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, Michael displayed a talent for the visual artist an early age. This natural talent was reinforced during his high school years while attending North Carolina School of Performing Arts, Winston-Salem, NC. During Michael's last year of high school, he was awarded a scholarship to study Drawing and Art History in Europe.

Michael then attended Atlanta College of Art in Atlanta. His concentration was in painting. While attending Atlanta College of Art, Michael entered the Collections of Life and Heritage, Inc., 1st Invitational Art Show, winning first place for his painting "Sunday Morning." In 1987 Michael was awarded a Bachelor of Fine Arts.



Artist Michael C. Morgan will unveil a commissioned work entitled "Venus" during an anniversary reception at Karats Rhythm and Blues.

Since graduation, Michael has been with the Department of Adult Education at the High Museum of Art and with Art Installation Services. He has also taught art classes to inter-city youths and lectured at Livingstone College. Michael has exhibited his work in many shows and exhibitions and has also received a grant from the Bureau of Cultural Affairs to produce works.

Michael has only started to climb towards a successful career and he will continue to work toward becoming one of the greats.

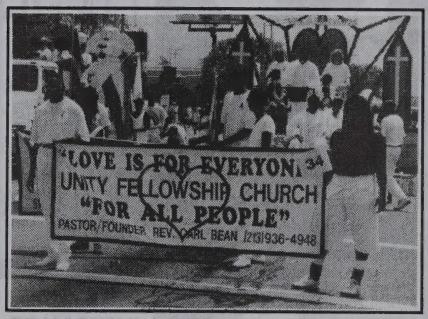
Black Gay Activist Honored!

This year Atlanta's African-American Gay & Lesbian Community will honor the memory of Bayard Rustin during a rally just prior to the annual King Day March. The rally will begin at 12 noon on Monday, January 15, 1996 in the parking lot next to Velvet's (John Wesley Dobbs Ave.). Take MARTA to the Peachtree Center Station, exit at the Georgia Pacific Building. Please join us immediately after the rally as we march as a Black Gay contingent with the African-American Community.

We feel that it is extremely important to begin to build bridges within the African-American community. Let's show our community that we are not afraid to be visible and that we love being Black! Let's join hands and march with our elders, our children, our leaders and humanitarians. Let us reclaim our seat at the Black Family Table.

At one time Bayard Rustin was one of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s top advisors. He is credited as the organizer of the 1963 March on Washington. Rustin was black and gay.

"My being Gay was not a problem for Dr. King but a problem for the movement .... The committee finally came to the decision that my sex life was a burden to Dr. King. I think it was around July when they advised him that he should ask me to leave. ..."



PHOTOGRAPH BY RON SINGLETON

Join Unity Fellowship Atlanta, Venus Magazine and the Men of Second Sunday Discussion Group for the Bayard Rustin Pre-March Rally and King March '96.

This was about 1960, however King continued to consult Rustin although he was not publicly a part of the inner circle. In 1963 it appeared that Rustin would be named director of the March on Washington. It was the strong objections from Roy Wilkins, then heading the NAACP, who maintained that it was not Rustin's homosexuality that was in question but despite Rustin's "talents, I don't think you should lead this important march." Rustin quoted Wilkins in a 1985 interview.

A. Philip Randolph became the director saying he would only accept if he could appoint Rustin as the deputy director. Rustin read the closing list of demands after King's "I Had A Dream." Rustin and Randolph founded A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI), to improve the lives of Negroes in the trade unions and for racial equality and economic justice for all Negroes. Today African American unionists who benefited from APRI total over three million.

Rustin died in 1987, the same year as author James Baldwin and Harlem Renaissance writer Richard Bruce Nugent. Surprisingly, a CD of Rustin as a singer was released in '94 by the Bayard Rustin Fund in New York.

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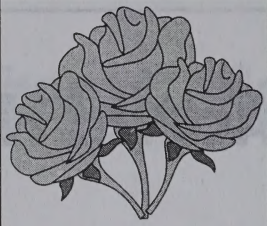

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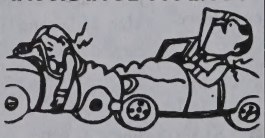

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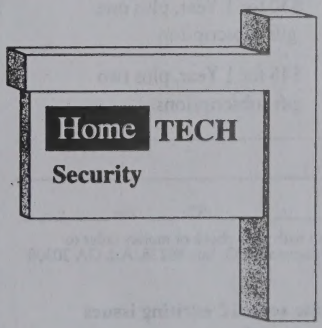

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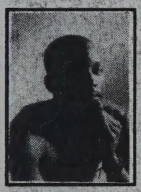
News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell and Dr. Helene D. Gayle, Director of National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention for the CDC, both participated in the opening plenary session of President Clinton's Conference on HIV/AIDS on December 6, 1995.

The family of poet/author/performer **Essex Charles Hemphill** have established a fund in his memory.



The purpose of the fund is to finance the completion of projects of Essex was working on at the time of his death. Contributions can be sent to The Essex Charles Hemphill Memorial Fund, c/o The National Capitol Bank of Washington, 316 Pennsylvania Ave., SE, Washington, DC. 20003. All contributions are tax deductible.

Portsbridge Hospice, Inc., a licensed hospice facility in northeast Atlanta, opened its doors in April of this year to provide impatient care for persons with AIDS. Since opening, Portsbridge has served as a home to some fifty residents. Although a large number of patients are living with AIDS, care at the facility is available to anyone diagnosed with a terminal illness. Their mission is to provide personal support and care in a loving environment to those whose life expectancy is limited. All services are designed to preserve human dignity, enhance quality of life and provide compassionate care for the resident, their family, and friends. Located in the residential neighborhood of Dunwoody, services at Portsbridge Hospice are not based on ability to pay. For additional information call (404) 936-9546.

A special early release of **And This Too Will Pass**, the latest literary work of Atlanta author **E. Lynn Harris**, has been approved by Doubleday Book Publishers for sale in Dallas at the ninth annual Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum to be held February 13-19, 1996.

Urvashi Vaid returns to Atlanta as co-grand marshall of this year's 1996 Martin Luther King, Jr. March on January 15. Vaid will march as a representative of the National gay community and will speak at a rally at the Martin Luther King Center for Non-violent Social Change on Auburn Avenue after the march.

The next general meeting of **GLAAD/Atlanta** is scheduled for Sunday, January 7, 1996 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM at the GLAAD office located at 828 West Peachtree Street, 2nd floor (at Fifth and West Peachtree Streets). For additional information, please call 404-876-1398.

Treatment newsletter focuses on some of the common annoyances of HIV infection. New York City—Community Prescription Service (CPS), the nation's only HIV+ owned and operated mail order prescription service, announces the publication of its most recent issue of InfoPack, a resource-filled AIDS treatment newsletter that is distributed free of charge to AIDS service organizations, health care professionals, clinics and individuals nationwide. Free copies of the InfoPack are available by calling Community Prescription Service at (800) 842-0502.

Research Study of Combination AIDS Therapies Underway. Whitehouse Station, NJ, Oct. 31, 1995—The inter-Company Collaboration for AIDS Drug Development with PAREXEL International Corporation announced today that the second research study for the Collaboration has begun to enroll patients at sev-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 49

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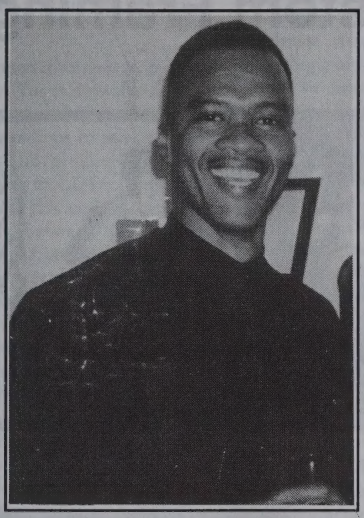

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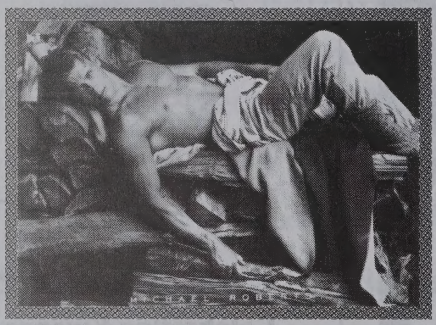

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(Next to The Crabhouse)

The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45

eral research centers in the United States. The study evaluates the ability of two different three-drug combinations to reduce the viral load and produce a sustained increase in CD4 cells in patients who are HIV positive, have a CD4 count between 200 and 500 cells/mm3, and who have not previously received antiretroviral therapy. Patients and physicians who are interested in enrollment information about this triple combination study can call the Inter-Company Collaboration's Clinical Coordinating Center located at PAREXEL at 1-800-925-AIDS from 9 am to 5 PM E.S.T., or call local Atlanta Doctor Steven Marlowe at (404) 350-5714.

The Atlanta Lambda Center's first in a series of Community Forums featured as special guest **Mandy Carter**, coordinator of North Carolina Mobilization '96: Mobilizing the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Vote to Defeat Jesse Helms. The forum focused on "the state of the movement" on the national level. Carter discussed North Carolina Mobilization '96 and told those present how they can get involved in this effort. The second Community Forum has been scheduled for Sunday, January 14th, in the same location. The focus of this forum will be our local l/g/b/t community and movement. In addition to the Lambda Center, this second forum will be sponsored by the Georgia Equality Project and the Atlanta Pride Committee, and will feature as a special guest Urvashi Vaid. For more information, call Saralyn Chesnut at (404) 727-2136.

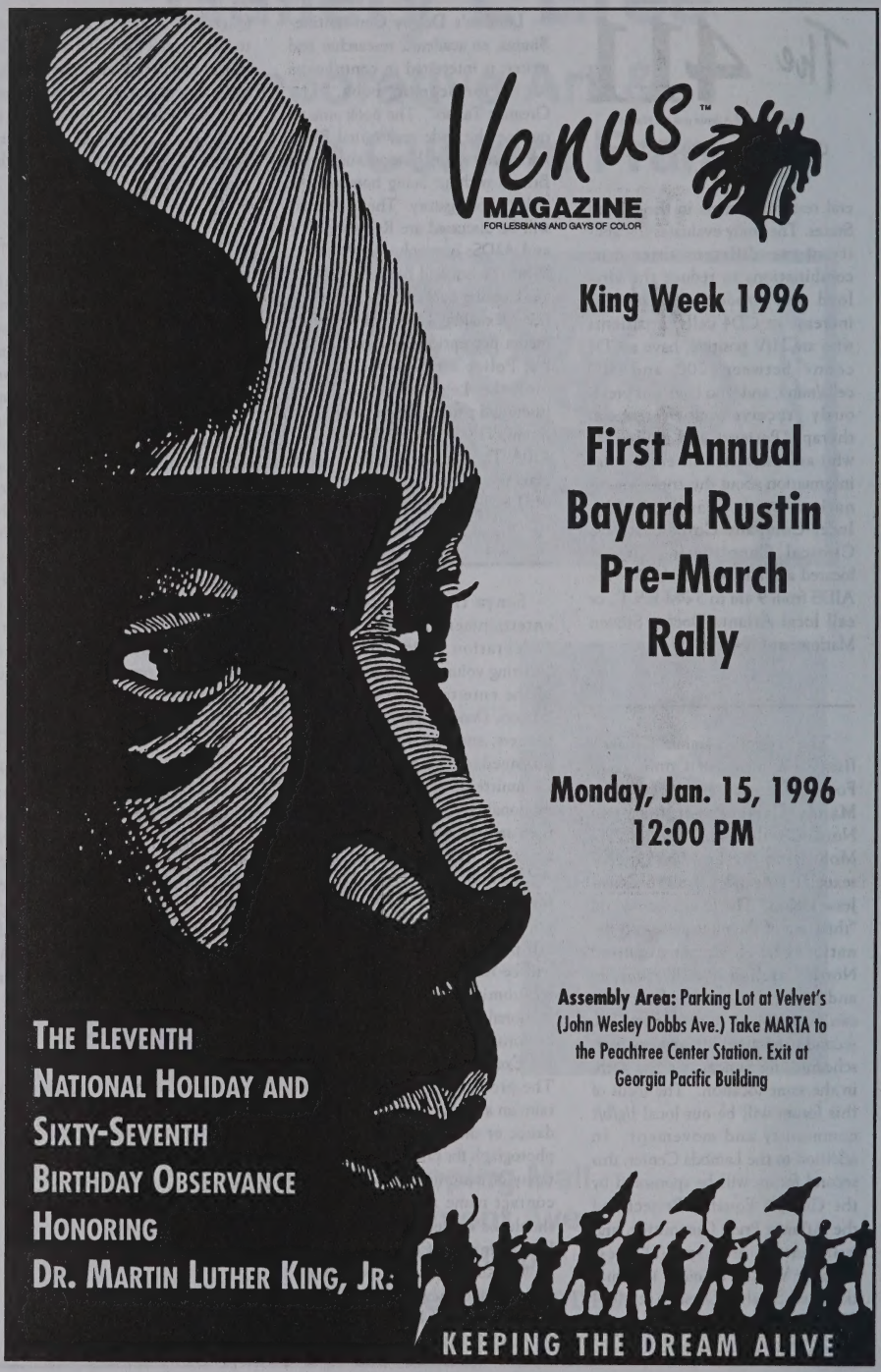
London's Delroy Constantine-Simms, an academic researcher and writer, is interested in contributors for his forthcoming book, "The Greatest Taboo." The book aims to outline the wide and varied Black perspectives on homosexuality in Britain without being homophobic or being derogatory. The issues that will be discussed are Religion; HIV and AIDS; homophobia in music; White racism and Black homosexuals; Coming out; myths surrounding homosexuality; The Black & White media perceptions of homosexuality; Police attitudes to anti gay violence; Legislation, etc. Any interested parties may contact Pablo Imani, Think Doctor Publications, 420A The High Road, Tottenham Haringey, London N174HJ, Tel: 0181 808 4513 or 0181 885 4372.

Sonya Hemphill, co-chair of entertainment for Atlanta Pride Celebration 1996, is currently enlisting volunteers for every aspect of the entertainment committee. Singers, Dancers, bands, ethnic performers, and children's performers are needed. The Atlanta Pride Committee will be accepting promotional kits until January 25, 1996 from artists interested in performing at the 1996 Atlanta Pride festival, June 28, 29, and 30. All performers will be required to submit promotional kits to be considered—No Exceptions.

The promotional kit should contain: an audio tape or CD, video for dance or other type performance, photograph for print purposes, biography of performer or group, and a contact name and number. Kits should be mailed to Atlanta Pride Entertainment Committee, 4880 Lower Roswell Road, Suite 630-117, Marietta, GA 30068. All inquiries should be done by mail. Questions by phone should placed to Sonya at (770) 263-0554. The Entertainment Committee is also accepting resumes from individuals who are interested in working as stage crew or stage managers. Resumes can be submitted to the address noted above.

On January, 26, 1995 from 8:30 am – 12 Noon at the Holiday Inn (130 Clairmont Ave., Decatur) there will be a **Community Housing Forum** for **social workers, case managers, discharge planners and insurance specialists** focusing on housing options for people living with HIV. Facilitating the workshops are Jim Sacco, MSW, LCSW and Mary Lubinsky, Director of the Living Room. After the day's conclusion, a Housing Fair and Slide Show presentation will take place. The Community Housing Forum is free of charge. Complimentary Continental Breakfast provided. For further details, contact Home But Not Alone at (404) 875-7881, ext. 27.

Black Gay Pride Atlanta '96 will hold its next general meeting on Sunday, January 7, 1996 at Karats Rhythm and Blues at 6 PM. Nominations are still being taken for board members. Any interested parties should contact the search committee (404) 622-8069 ASAP. The chosen board of directors will be announced on Monday, January 15,1996.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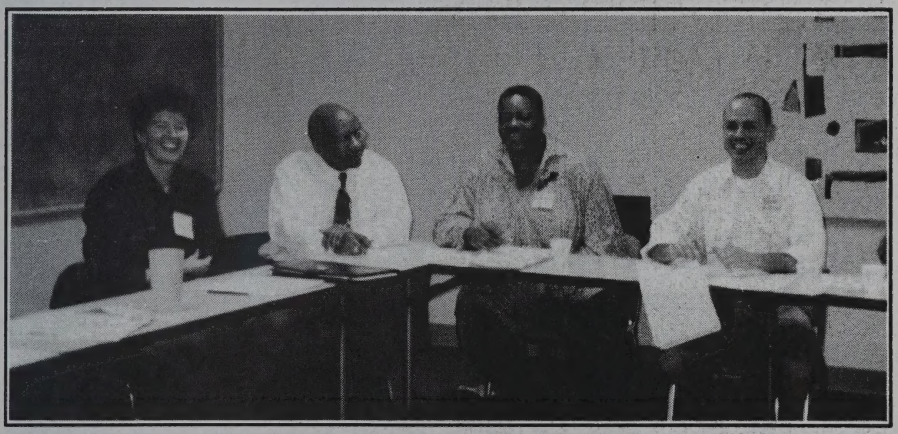
KEEPING THE DREAM ALIVE

Community Unites to Revitalize the Atlanta Chapter of G.L.A.D.D.



Participants at GLAAD reorganizing meeting include (l-r): Lawrie Demorest, co-chair HRC Annual Dinner; Dr. Roderick Linzie, Department of Sociology, Georgia State University; Charlene Cothran, Publisher of Venus Magazine; Jason Hefner, of G.L.A.A.D. National.

Over two dozen members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered community and allies gathered to plan the rebirth of the Atlanta chapter of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (G.L.A.A.D.). "I am excited by the number of people who attended, their commitment to making G.L.A.A.D./Atlanta a truly inclusive chapter and the level of enthusiasm" stated Floyd Taylor, one of the organizers of the meeting.

Discussion focused on ensuring that GLAAD provides services to both the greater Atlanta and the southeastern regional media outlets. Emphasis was placed on reading and working with African-American media and the media serving other people of color communities. As a result of these discussions, several committees were formed.

The next general meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 7 at 7:00 PM at the G.L.A.A.D. office located at 828 West Peachtree Street, Second Floor. For additional information, please call 404/876-1398.

P.O.S.E. '96

Prides of the Southeast

First Annual Regional Conference
January 13-14, 1996 ▼ Atlanta, GA

Hosted by the Atlanta Pride Committee, Inc.

Proposed Workshops Include:

Logistical Issues

Parade/March Logistics ▼ Festival Logistics ▼ Media Relations
Pride Guide (Logistics) ▼ Merchandise Program

Governance Issues

Board Of Directors ▼ Community Outreach (Transgender/Youth)
Budgeting and Planning ▼ Long Range Planning

Proposed Plenary

Community Relationship ▼ Political vs. Nonpolitical vs. Apolitical
Corporate Sponsorship ▼ Regional Coordination
Resource Sharing ▼ IAL/GPC ▼ Regional Pride Guide

Contact the Atlanta Pride Committee for more information at:
P.O. Box 52024, Atlanta, Georgia 30324 770/662-4533 or
e-mail: PrideSE@AOL.com or WWW http://users.aol.com/PrideSE

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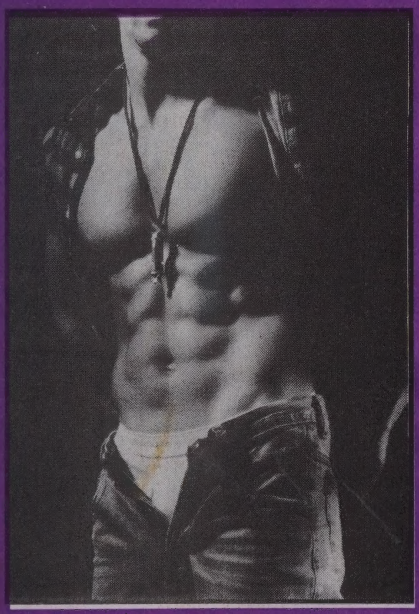

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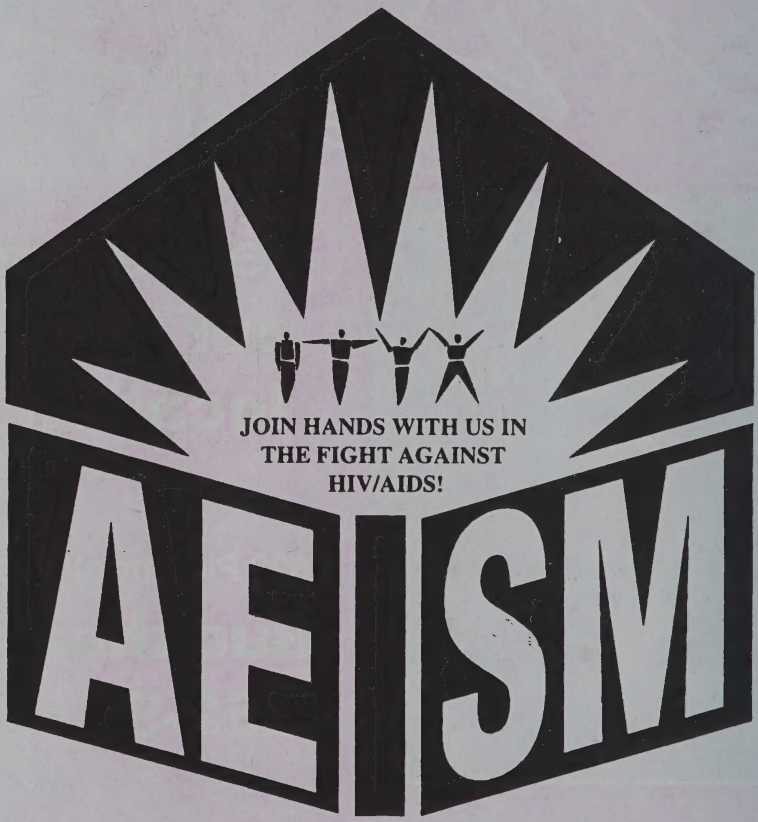
In Georgia there were over 6,000 reported cases of AIDS in the African-American Community, 67% of which are Homosexual/Bi-Sexual Men.



Our primary focus is black, gay men. We provide support through housing assistance, bar/club outreach, support groups, and financial assistance.

"We Love You, Love Yourself... BE SAFE!"

If you would like to volunteer, need information, or would like to make a tax deductible contribution, please contact:

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pflag!

By Charlene Cothran

The mission of PFLAG, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, is to promote the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons, their families, and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal rights.

The international organization has 380 chapters across the U.S. and a new South Metro Chapter in Atlanta. With the deafening silence surrounding lesbian and gay children, and AIDS and HIV, African-American parents are often devastated and isolated when they first find out that a child is gay or lesbian or that a child has AIDS.

PFLAG parent Marci Haver says the South Metro area's new chapter has seen and encourages increasing participation by African-American parents seeking and giving support to one another. Marci Says, "In this Olympic year for Atlanta, it is important that we give this gift to our South Metro community: Light, where there is darkness; Courage, where there is fear; Tolerance, where there is bigotry; Love where there is hate."

Belinda Jefferson, center, is delighted that her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Hercules Jefferson, were on hand to support her at HRC's Detroit Dinner. When Mr. Jefferson was asked how he felt about his daughter being an out lesbian, he replied, "I love my daughter, and to each her own!"

According to Judy Colbs, president of Atlanta PFLAG, the Chicago chapter may be the only one in the country focusing specifically on the support and education of African-American parents and families. PFLAG National recently launched a media campaign against hate and intolerance entitled Project Open Mind. The target audience of the commercials are the millions of Americans who neither support nor express intolerance of lesbian and gay lifestyles. It is hoped that viewers will learn about the myths and lies associated with the lives of gay and lesbian Americans, and how hateful attacks, teen suicide, and anti-gay discrimination in employment and housing has been fostered by such myths and lies.

Put your parents in touch with PFLAG! Just call (404) 691-4729 or write PFLAG Atlanta/South Metro, 430 Lynhurst Dr., Atlanta, GA 30311. One day, when they grow up, they'll thank you!

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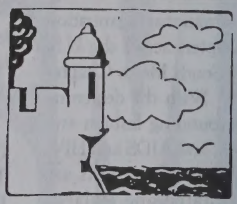

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Waiting To Exhale

Arista Records has released the Waiting To Exhale soundtrack album. The record features an unprecedented powerhouse lineup of music's hottest "divas": Whitney Houston (who also stars in the film), Toni Braxton, Aretha Franklin, Mary J. Blige, TLC, Brandy, Chaka Khan, Patti LaBelle, Faith Evans, SWV, CeCe Winans, Shanna, For Real, Chante Moore, and Sonja Marie. The album was written and produced by Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, who wrote 14 new songs plus the score for the 20th Century Fox film.

The first single is by Whitney Houston. The title is "Exhale (Shoop, Shoop)," and it's a warm lilting ballad that summarizes the overall theme of the film and its soundtrack.

Ms. Houston commented: "Whenever Kenny and I get together, it clicks—it works—it's magic! All of the songs on the soundtrack speak of the friendship of the four ladies in the film. An equally talented group of ladies are on the soundtrack and I'm just so glad they agreed to do it!"

Whitney Houston's new song Exhale (Shoop Shoop) *was the first release off of "Waiting to Exhale."*

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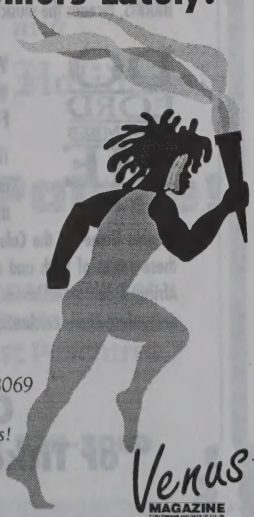


Venus MAGAZINE

Jomandi Announces an Absolutely Fabulous February 3 Shows Back to Back in Celebration of Black History Month

FRATERNITY

a political thriller...
Jomandi tops itself
Jan.26–Feb. 11

WHAT PRICE DO WE PAY FOR POWER? How do five visionary men succumb to the seductions of power and lose sight of true brotherhood? These are the questions dramatically posed by JEFF STETSON, author of "THE MEETING," in the story set in a major urban city, where a powerful Black politician must run against his own protege. With Congressional and presidential elections less than two years away, Jomandi reprises this taut political hit of the 1989–90 season. It's time for another reality check.

Trick The Devil

a blues tale in thekey of life
Feb. 23–March 10

A woman loved a man; he done her wrong; she takes up with a stranger in town who plays upon her loneliness like the blues. The stranger, Robert Johnson, is heralded as the best blues musician who ever lived. Unknown at 24 and dead at 26, Johnson developed his blues "powers" so quickly that many believed the tale he told; he'd "tricked the devil" and risked his soul to learn to play his woman stealing blues. Writer BILL HARRIS, threads the music and legend of Robert Johnson into this mystical story set in a roadside cafe.

DO LORD REMEMBER ME

you'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll remember...
Feb. 13–Feb. 17

The critics wrote of Jomandi's "Do Lord," it's "like sitting down with your grandparents...," it is "an exploration of collective memory because some things should never be forgotten." The play by JAMES DE JONGH, set in the Virginia Home for the Colored in 1936, weaves together the reminiscences of former slaves and places these voices of faith and courage against a backdrop of spirituals and visual images of modern day African-American achievers. Director Andrea Frye and members of the original cast recreate this stunning and unforgettable celebration of the generations.

Call (404) 876-6346
or Ticketmaster (404) 817-8700

PROFILE OF A QUEEN

Name:..... Krystal Towers

Age:..... 27

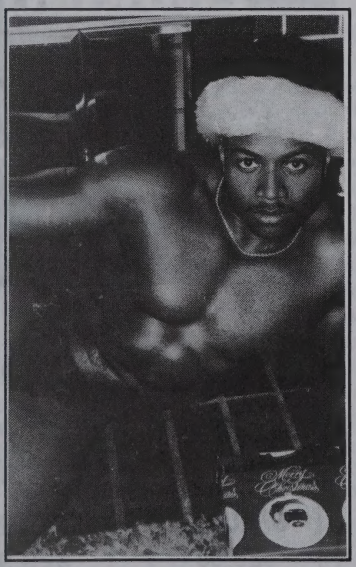
Status:..... Single

Hometown:..... Denver, Colorado

Current Titles:.. Ms. LaJazz
... Ms. Hide-n-Seek

Former Titles: .. Ms. Black Colorado
... Ms. Raven
... Ms. Cloud Nine

Ms. Krystal Towers' impeccable performances of such Divas as Whitney Houston, Phylis Hyman, RuPaul, and Millie Jackson has captivated her audiences. Currently performing in Atlanta, her 7 foot height (in 4" heels), beauty, poise and elegance sets the stage for this powerhouse. A board member of People of Color Consortium Against AIDS, she is also a community service representative for children living with AIDS.



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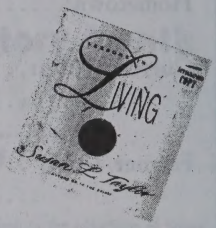

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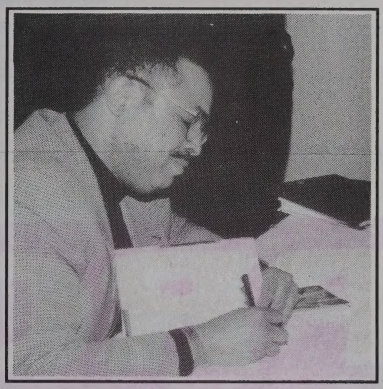
Forum announces 9th annual conference highlights

Best-selling author E. Lynn Harris will give the first major reading from his new book, "And This Too Shall Pass," at the National Black Lesbian and Gay Conference February 15-19, 1996 in Dallas, Texas.

The reading is one of several exciting events scheduled to take place at the 9th Annual Conference of the National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum, the nation's oldest and largest black lesbian and gay organization. Also at the conference, Drs. Sylvia Rhue and Dee Mosbacher and Frances Reid will screen their new film, "All God's Children," a documentary response to the radical right's homophobic efforts to exploit black churches.

Other invited guests include Harvard Professor Cornel West and former Congresswoman Barbara Jordan.

Each year, the conference brings together more than 1,000 participants from across the country in the nation's largest gathering of African American lesbians and gays to address enlightening topics that affect the community. This year's conference theme, "Black Lesbians and Gays: Continuing the Struggle," celebrates the lives, legacies and ongoing work of the African American lesbian gay, bisexual and transgender communities across the nation.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JENA JONES

E. Lynn Harris will read and sign his latest book, "And This Too Will Pass," at the Ninth Annual National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum Conference, in Dallas.

Previous conference speakers have included the Rev. Jesse Jackson, U. S. Rep. Maxine Waters, former Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, Angela Davis, Bell Hooks, Bishop Carl Bean, *Essence Magazine* Executive Editor Linda Villarosa, Cambridge, Mass. Mayor Ken Reeves, Dr. Marjorie Hill, and writer/activists Audre Lorde, Essex Hemphill, and Barbara Smith. Previous conference entertainers have included Chaka Khan, Natalie Cole, Whoopi Goldberg, Peabo Bryson, and Me'shell Ndege Ocello.

Conference topics include men's and womyn's issues, personal development, grassroots activism, HIV/AIDS, spirituality, young adult issues, leadership and public policy. Highlights of the conference include the Annual Awards Banquet and Dance and the AIDS Memorial Service.

This year's conference will be held at the Harvey Hotel Brook Hollow, 7030 N. Stemmons; Dallas, Texas 75247, and is being hosted by Dallas Ujima.

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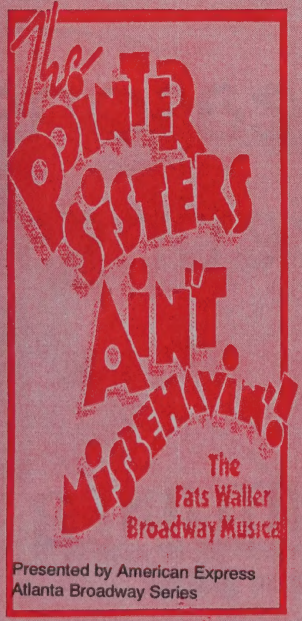
Black Arts Festival Hosts Pointers

The National Black Arts Festival (NBAF) will host the Pointer Sisters, stars of the new, international tour of *Ain't Misbehavin'*, at a gala benefit reception following the opening night performance at 8 PM on January 9, 1996. The Pointer Sisters, currently celebrating their 20th anniversary as a hit recording group, will bring their dazzling style to the Fox Theater in this Tony Award-winning musical. Directed by the show's original choreographer, Arthur Faria, *Ain't Misbehavin'* is one of the most acclaimed musicals in Broadway history, bringing to life the music of Fats Waller.

Sponsored by Wachovia Bank, the evening's gala will benefit the National Black Arts Festival's educational ArtReach Programs. Other contributing sponsors for this event include Georgia Power, KISS 104, and Venus Magazine.

Tickets for the event are $100 and $150 for individuals, and $1,500 and $3,000 for corporate and group packages. Tickets may be purchased at the NBAF Office, 236 Forsyth St. SW, Suite 400, Atlanta, GA 30303. Tickets should be reserved by December 15, 1995. For more information call (404) 730-7315.

The National Black Arts Festival, the largest event of its kind, presents the work of artists of African descent in music, dance, theater, film, folk art, visual art, literature, and performance art, biennially in Atlanta, Georgia. The next NBAF will be June 28 - July 7, 1996. Sponsors of the NBAF include Wachovia Bank, the Fulton County Arts Council, The Miller Brewing Co., Coca-Cola Company, AT&T, Delta Air Lines, Atlanta Journal Constitution, TBS, Rich's, BellSouth, Health Quest Magazine and the City of Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs.



The Board of Directors
of the
National Black Arts Festival
invites you to an
Opening Night Gala
"Ain't Misbehavin!"
starring the
Pointer Sisters
January 9, 1995 at 8:00 PM
The Fabulous Fox Theatre

Performance and Opening Night Reception with the Pointer Sisters following the show.

Individuals: $100 to $150

Reserve tickets by callin
(404) 730-7315
Deadline December 27, 199.

National Black Arts Festival

Gala Sponsors: Wachovi. Bank; KISS 104; Venus Magazine; Georgia Power.

Happy Anniversary Venus!

Seasons Greetings!

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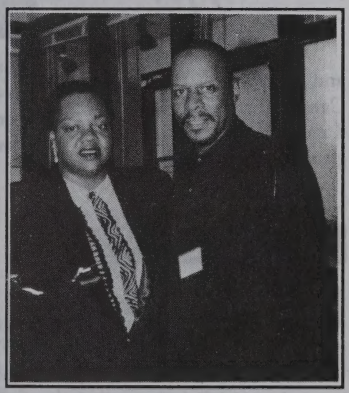
OUT & about

The women of Trikone, Atlanta's South Asian gay and lesbian organization gathered at Emory University in honor of Audre Lorde.

Film directors Ada-Gay Griffin and Michelle Parkerson cuttin' up with the premiere women of ZAMI following "A Litany for Survival," a film on Audre Lorde

Members of Adobi Muse and guest poets read the works of Essex Hemphill during an Atlanta Memorial



Publisher Charlene Cothran and Actor/Artistic Director of the National Black Arts Festival Avery Brooks at the NBAF's Kick-off Party earlier this year.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SUSAN J. ROSS

CONFERENCES

Ninth Annual National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Foundation Conference, Dallas Texas. February 15–19, 1996. Call (213) 964-7820 for more information.

CONGRATULATIONS

Happy Anniversary

Craig and Leonardo. The couple will celebrate 4 years on December 18.

Happy Birthday

and Happy New Year to John Cartwright, Front doorman, Karats Rhythm & Blues, whose grand entrance was 12-31-66.

DANCE

body *and* soul

at Atlanta's Fabulous Fox Theatre February 1–4. Showtimes 2PM and 8PM. Prices $10–$38. Call TicketMaster at 404/817-8700 for tickets.

The Cuban National Folkloric Dance Ensemble. Feb. 13 at 8PM at Atlanta's Fabulous Fox Theatre in association with the National Black Arts Festival.

GALLERY OPENINGS

Sistagraphy proudly presents the exhibition

"Who HE?"

a showing of recent photographic works by Warren O Fletcher. The show continues through January 5, 1996 at Studio 658, 658 Whitehall Street, SW, Atlanta by appointment. Call 404/584-0409 for more information.

MEETINGS

Home But Not Alone, AIDS Survival Project, The Living Room and AID Atlanta will host a housing forum,

"HIV and Housing Options"

Friday, January 26, 1996 from 8:30 AM to 12 noon for all case managers, Discharge planners, social workers, housing providers, and insurance specialists. Facilitators are Jim Sacco, MSW, LCSW and Mary Jane Lubinski. Call Rita 875-7881, ext. 27.

The next meeting for **Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD/ Atlanta)** is scheduled for Sun., Jan. 7, 1996, 7 to 9 PM at the GLAAD office at 828 W. Peachtree, 2nd floor. (404) 876-1398.

Annual Holiday Pride Meeting

The community is invited to attend the annual holiday Pride meeting to be held December 21 at 7 PM at the Atlanta Marriott Northeast in the DeKalb Room, 2000 Century Blvd., NE (404/325-0000), and the new location for all Atlanta Pride meetings. Besides festive refreshments, the evening's events include the selection of the 1996 Atlanta Pride logo representing the Pride theme "People of the World: Listen, Think, Act" and discussion of upcoming Pride events including the first (but not only) **volunteer kickoff party on January 21 at Fat Tuesdays in Buckhead.**

Black Gay Pride

general meeting, Sunday, January 7, 1996 at Karat's Rhythm & Blues, 511 Peachtree Street, 6 PM.

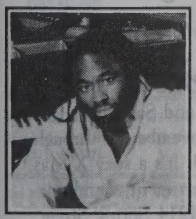
MUSIC

Ain't Misbehavin'

with the Pointer Sisters January 9–14. Call (404) 730-7315 for ticket information.

The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra presents Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute Concert with Yoel Levi conducting and Terrence Wilson, piano. Jan. 11–13, 8PM. Call (404) 733-4800.

The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and dynamic pianist Awadagin Pratt will perform the effervescent Piano Concerto No. 4 by Saint-Saëns Jan. 25–26 at 8PM. Call (404) 733-4800 for tickets.



NEW YEAR'S EVE

Blue Jeans/ Black Tie

New Year's Eve Affair by Green Eyes Production. Sunday, December 31, 1995. $20. 10 PM–3 AM. Baltimore. 997-9443.

CELEBRATE KWANZAA

with Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church's Kwanzaa Celebration for Brothers and Sisters in the Life. Featuring Drummers, Dancers, Cultural Presentations and a Pot Luck Meal. 2:30 PM. Virginia-Highland Baptist Church, 743 Virginia Ave., NE, Atl. 404/388-4624. Bring a covered dish.

Fourth Annual

Sparkle Nite

"Pre" New Years Eve Blow out, NY Hosted by Rachel & Co. (718) 842-2929.

E.U.N.I.C.E. presents a

Silk & Satin New Year's Eve Weekend

Saturday & Sunday, December 30 and 31, 1995.at the Fabulous Valley Forge Sheraton Hotel, 1160 First Avenue, King of Prussia, PA. Weekend package features three days/two nights hotel accommodations. $75 per person. NO Tickets sold at door. For more information call 215-242-4255.

Simplicity Attractions Unlimited of Baltimore in association with Nefertiti Productions and Entertainment, LTD, presents

The Interstate Champagne Charity Ball

on Saturday April 13, 1996 from 10 PM to 3 AM. Semi-formal. Open Bar 10 PM - 12 AM. Savory hors d'oeuvres, unique entertainment, midnight Champagne Toast, dancing. A Pre-Ball Party will be Friday, April 12, 1996 from 10 PM to 3 AM. At Days Inn, 2700 New York Avenue NE, Washington, DC. Advance Sales only, 440 a person. Contact Bess Knowings, Chairperson (718) 992-9073.

PARTIES

Simplicity Attractions Unlimited of New York invites you to a

Gala New Year's Eve Celebration

on Sunday, December 31, from 10 PM to 3 AM at 19955-99 Westerchester Ave., Bronx, NY. Catered by Kismet Caterers, there will be a buffet, open bar, champagne, and party favors for a donation of $50 a person. No tickets will be sold at the door. For tickets and/or information contact Bess Knowings (718) 992-9073.

RALLY

First Annual Bayard Rustin King Day Rally. Monday, January 15, 1996. 12 Noon. Downtown Atlanta. Assemble at the parking lot of Velvets (John Wesley Dobbs Avenue. Take MARTA to the Peachtree center Station, Exit at Georgia Pacific Bulding.)

RECEPTIONS

The National Black Arts Festival salutes the 1st Anniversary Celebration of Venus Magazine Sunday, January 14, 1995, 6:30 PM sharp at Karats Rhythm & Blues, 511 Peachtree St., downtown Atlanta. No cover before 8 PM.

National Black Arts Festival

Live entertainment will follow the introduction of the Venus staff, the unveiling of commissioned art work, and the introduction of national dignitaries. Join us!

Jomandi presents the Langston Hughes holiday classic

Black Nativity

December 15-23 at the Georgia Tech Center for the Arts, 349 Ferst St. Tickets from Jomandi 876-6340; Ticketmaster Arts line 817-8700; or Georgia Tech Center for the Arts, 894-9600. Directed by Marsha A. Jackson, choreographed by Patdro Harris, music and vocal direction by Keith Wilson and Sheila Strout.

FOR YOUR EYES

the only gay female adult Entertainment Party ever, will be December 17 at Club Outa Control (next door to Loretta's), 688 Spring Street. Doors open at 9 PM. Cover: $5, Table dance: $5 in VIP Room). ID required.

The National Black Arts festival (NBAF) will host the

POINTER SISTERS

stars of the new, international tour of *Ain't Misbehavin'*, at a gala benefit reception following the opening night performance at 8 PM on January 9, 19;96. tickets for the event are $100 and $150 for individuals, and $1,500 and $3,000 for corporate and group packages. Tickets may be purchased at the National Black arts Festival office, 236 Forsyth St., Suite 400, Atlanta, GA 30303. For more information call (404) 730-7315.

SIGNINGS

April Sinclaire will sign her latest book,

"Ain't Gonna Be The Same Fool Twice"

at Outwrite Bookstore, 931 Monroe Drive, Tues., Jan. 23. 12 Noon. Sinclaire is also author of "Coffee Will Make You Black."

THEATER

John Amos in

Halley's Comet

at Atlanta's Fabulous Fox Theatre Feb. 5 at 8PM in association with the National Black Arts Festival.

Seven Stages Presents

School House Rocks

with Freddie Hendricks Youth Ensemble of Atlanta Jan. 15, 18–21, 24–28, 31 and Feb. 1–4, 7–11. Call (404) 523-7647.

Jomandi's

FRATERNITY

What price shall we pay for power? Jan. 26–Feb. 11. 14th Street Playhouse. (404) 876-6346 for information.

The Whole World Theatre presents

Pimps, Queens, & Dope Fiends Christmas Special

every Friday and Saturday night beginning November 10 through December 23. It's a sexy X-Mas filled with merriment... and miracles. 9 PM 1214 Spring Street. $10. Call 404-817-PLAY for reservations.

ORGANIZATIONS

Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

Abundant Grace Community Church—743 Virginia Ave., Sunday worship–7:30 PM. (404) 815-0036.

ADODI New York—A self-supporting organization of gay and bisexual men of African Heritage. 432 West 43rd St, Ste. 8045, N.Y., N.Y. 10036

African Ancestral Lesbian United for Societal Changed (Formerly Salsa Soul)—(212) 620-7310. Candice.

African American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA)—(404) 908-7371.

AIDS Education Services for Minorities (AESM)—P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, GA 30337. (404) 753-2900 or (404) 743-7733.

AIDS Response Knoxville—Suite 411, 109 Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919, (615) 450-2437.

AIDS Services in Asian Communities, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 212, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1938

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church—575 Boulevard. Sunday, 7 PM, evenings, 8:30 PM, (404) 622-1154.

Atlanta Lambda Center, Inc.—P.O. Box 15180, Atlanta, GA 30333. (404) 662-9010.

A. Lorde Collective—African-American Lesbians Organized to Renew Dignity and Empowerment. Hotline: (313) 862-3396.

AYA Institute—dedicated to the education and mental health of our community. P.O. Box 3824, Jersey City, N.J. 07303-3824 or (201) 451-3412.

Bisexual Womyn of Colour—BIWOC since 1991. P.O. Box 020136, Brooklyn, NY 11202-136. (212) 479-7886. Donna Reddy, pres.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. (BLGP Inc.)—Box 7184, Washington, DC. 20024.

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum—1219 S. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 964-7820. FAX (213) 964-7830.

Black & White Men Together—POB 1334, Atl., GA 30301-1334. (404) 892-BWMT.

Black Lesbians with Children—Erica Forbes 286-0842

Black Women's Network—Box 5, 136 Kingsland Height St., London, England, UK/E8/2NS

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)—Meets every Friday at 8 PM at the Amassi Center. 3419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA. For more info, call Ms. Clydis (510) 649-0536.

BLUeS—Bronx Lesbians United in Sisterhood, Event Organization. (212) 330-9196

Boyz of Distinction—P.O. Box 78091, Atl., GA 30532.

Brothers Back-2-Back, Inc.—An African American HIV/AIDS Organization, P.O. Box 11366, Atlanta, GA 30310. Voice: (404) 593-5805.

Chicago Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays—(312) 871-2117.

Cinnamon Productions—Womyn of Color event organizers. (718) 994-0028.

Creation Woman—poets/artists & affiliates meet last Sun. each month. (310) 422-1970.

D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men and Bisexuals—(202) 388-8078.

Dyfferent Gyrl Production—P.O. Box 13346, Atlanta, GA 30324. (404) 908-5340.

Friend of Friends—(301) 735-5023; P.O. Box 77075, Washington, D.C. 20013

GALAEI (for Latino gay men), 1233 Locust St., 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 985-3382

Gay and Out Productions—P.O. Box 111, Clarkston, GA 30021-0111. (404) 299-7809

Gay Black Female (GBF)—6312 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 114, Hollywood, CA 90028. (310) 288-6315.

The Gay and Lesbian Center—208 W. 13th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011.

Gay/Lesbian Latino/a Community Organization Out Reach, Inc.—(404) 346-3922 or (800) 441-2437.

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teacher's Network—P.O. Box 5512, Atlanta, Georgia 31107. (404) 872-4320.

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)—2103 N. Decatur Rd., Suite 190, Decatur, GA 30033. PH: (404) 377-4258. EM: info@gabc.gaypride.com

Home Free Ministry—P.O. Box 688, Atl., GA 30301. (404) 818-2033.

Hospitality Atlanta—(404) 627-1630.

International Black Writers & Artists—meet 2nd Sunday Bladwin Hills/Crenshaw (213) 964-3721.

Lambda Car Club/Dogwood Region—(404) 901-9447, POB 11705, Atl., GA 30355.

Las Buenas Amigas—(212) 868-7816. Carmen, The Gay & Lesbian Center, 208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011.

Latinos En Accion—Youth support group. P.O. Box 15388, Atlanta, GA 30325. (404) 621-5743. Yolanda Leeky, (404) 753-2840.

Lesbians Latinos en Nuestro Ambiente—(707) 292-7705.

LLEGO, National Latino/a Lesbian & Gay Organization—P.O. Box 44483, Wash., DC. 20026.

Malebox—Meeting black men. P.O. Box 75392, Wash., D.C. 20013.

Minority AIDS Project of Philly and Vicinity, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 218, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1937

MOCAA (Men of Color Against AIDS)—Boston, MA. (617) 442-3800

National Assoc. of Black & White Men Together—1747 Connecticut Ave., Washington, DC. 20020. (202) 462-3599.

National Black Women's Health Project—1237 Gordon, Street S.W., Atlanta, GA (404) 758-9590.

Night of the Black Independents—A film production society. 830-A Eastwood Ave., Atl., GA 30316. (404) 627-9900.

Our Cousin's House—An African American AIDS Organization. 1023 Dill Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30310. (404) 756-9202.

ONYX/Chicago—Leather Social Club for Men of Color and their friends. 1340 W. Irving Park Road, Suite 188, Chicago IL 60613.

Positive Black Lesbians United (PBLU)—P.O. Box 655, Avondale Estates, GA 30002. (404) 250-7950.

Pink Triangle Productions—Gay Female Entertainment Party Source. (770) 723-7292.

Project Open Hand, Atlanta—(404) 525-4620. Home delivered meals for people with AIDS related illness.

Project AZUKA, Inc.—An AIDS organization for women. P.O. Box 9173, Savannah, GA 31402. (912) 233-6733.

Pyramid Productions—Cultural Shows & Dances. (718) 622-5093.

Q-GLU—Queens Gays & Lesbians United. (718) 639-4951.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church—Box 50047, Atl., GA 30302. (404) 388-4624.

SAGE—Senior Action in a Gay Environment. (212) 741-2247.

SALGA—South Asian Lesbian Gay Association; P.O. Box 50, Cooper Station, NY, NY 10276-0050; (212) 294-2550; Email: salganyc@dorsai.org

Second Sunday Discussion Group—POB 1574, Decatur, GA 30031. (404) 629-0583.

Shades of Brown—Professional Womyn/Men of Color. (212) 439-1024.

Sisters of 30 Something Special—(404) 997-6240.

Sister Love, Inc.—(404) 753-7733, (404) 753-1500.

Sophisticated Ladies—Lesbian Group for Mature Women of Color. (202) 788-1866.

Southern Conference of Black Gay Men—P.O. Box 212421, Columbia S.C. 29221

Spelman College Lesbian Bi-Sexual Alliance—710 Peachtree St., Suite 126, Atlanta, GA 30308. (404) 908-5368.

The ADODI MUSE—a black gay male literary group; 348 Berean Ave. S.E., Atlanta, Ga 30312. (404) 521-2515.

The COLOURS Organization, Inc.—201 S. 12th., Ste. 1R, Phila. PA 19107. Education, prevention and support programs for sexual minority people of color. For more information, please contact (215) 627-6233.

The Men's Gathering—P.O. Box 190869, Dallas, Texas 75219-0869,(214) 521-5342, ext. 876. Meeting times: 4th Friday of each month, 7 pm

Tres—Dance Parties for Womyn of Color. (718) 670-3643

TRIKONE—An Asian gay and lesbian organization. trikatl@mindspring.com

ULOAH (United Lesbians of African Heritage)—1626 N. Wilcox Ave., #190, L.A., CA 90028. (213) 960-5051.

Unity, Inc. (for African American gay men), 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 214, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1876

Viva!—Lesbian and Gay Latino Arts Organization. (310) 301-8035.

Women in the Life—D.C.'s Black Lesb. party hotline. (202) 667-8078.

Women of Color Breast Cancer Survivors Support Project—8610 S. Sepulveda Blvd, Ste 200, L.A., CA 90045 (310) 216-3200.

WRFG Radio,Gay Graffiti with Deborah Paget—Thursdays, 7–8 PM.**Crossroads with Baldelie Jones**—3rd Thursday, 7–8 PM.**Sister Love, Sister's Time**—6 PM Thursdays**"Alternative Talk"**—2nd/4th Fridays, 6PM.

Yahimba, Lesbians of African Descent—1012 1/2 Dodge, Evanston, IL 60202 or (708) 328-7715

YouthPride—(404) 815-9965,Teen Support Group (13-18: Wednesday evenings 6:30-8:00; Young Adult Personal Growth Group (18-24 yo): Wednesday evenings 8:30-10:00.

ZAMI—Atlanta's premiere African American lesbian organization meets 2nd and 4th Sundays from 6:30 until 8:30 PM. Call (404) 370-1392.

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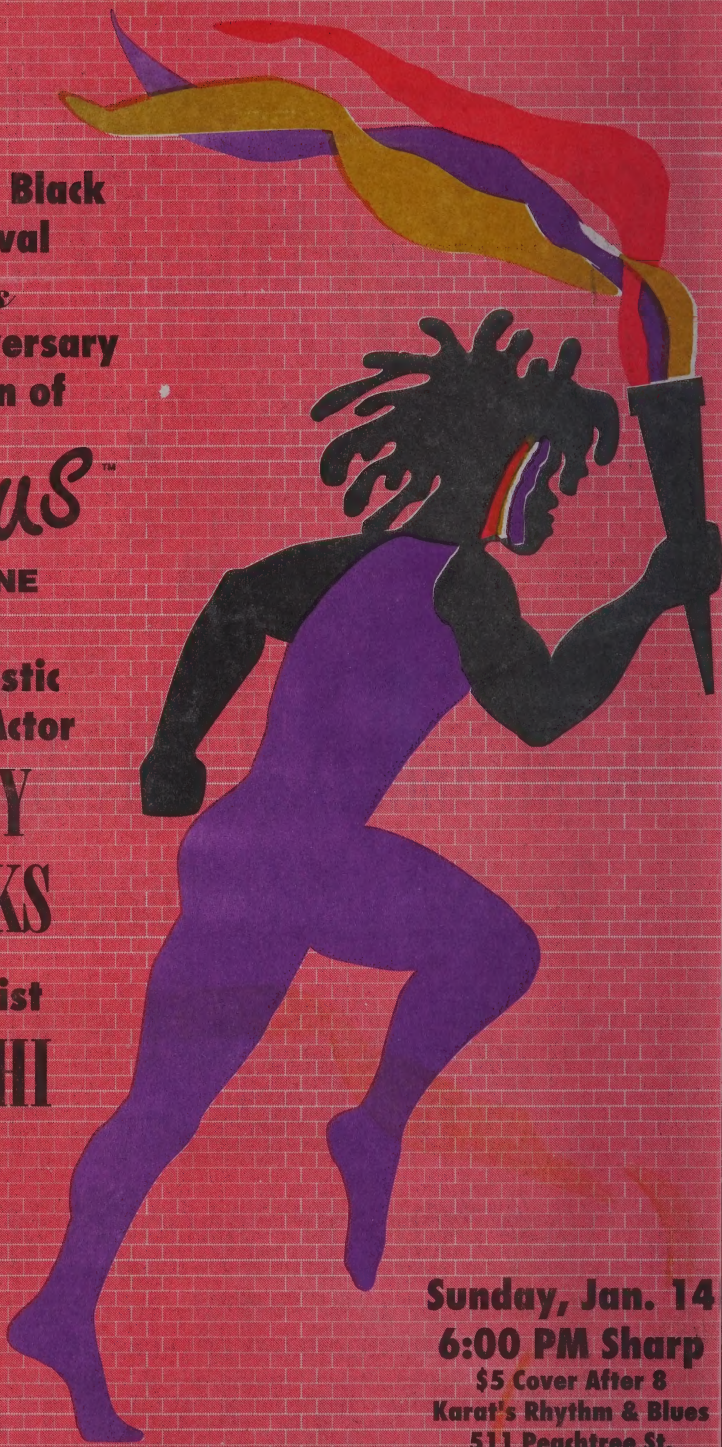

Sunday, Jan. 14

6:00 PM Sharp

$5 Cover After 8

Karat's Rhythm & Blues

511 Peachtree St.

(across from Crawford Long